Buffy
the Vampire
Slayer
VAMPYR

Buffy the Vampire Slayer™

SEASON 10 VOLUME 3

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—SciFiPulse

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"Pushes the plot forward in bold ways, provides both laughs and feels, and leaves our characters in very different places than were they were on the first page."
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the Vampire Slayer™

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Buffy the Vampire Slayer™

SEASON 10 VOLUME 3

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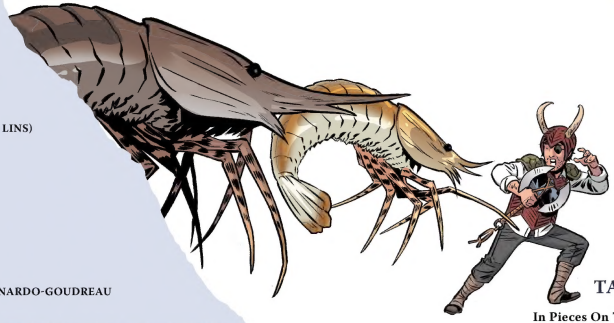

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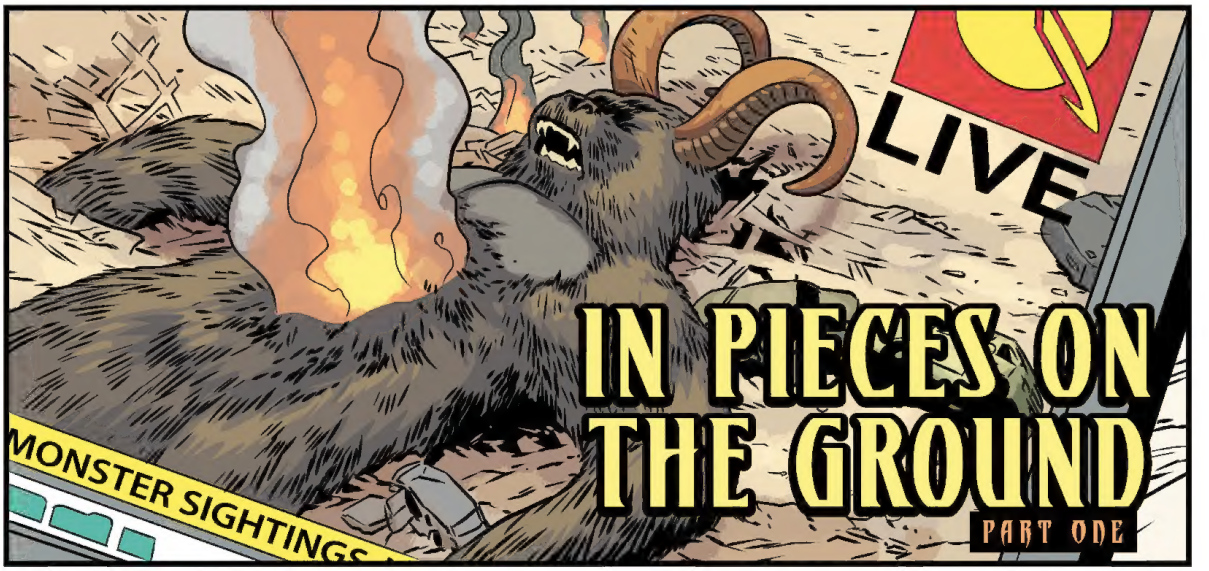
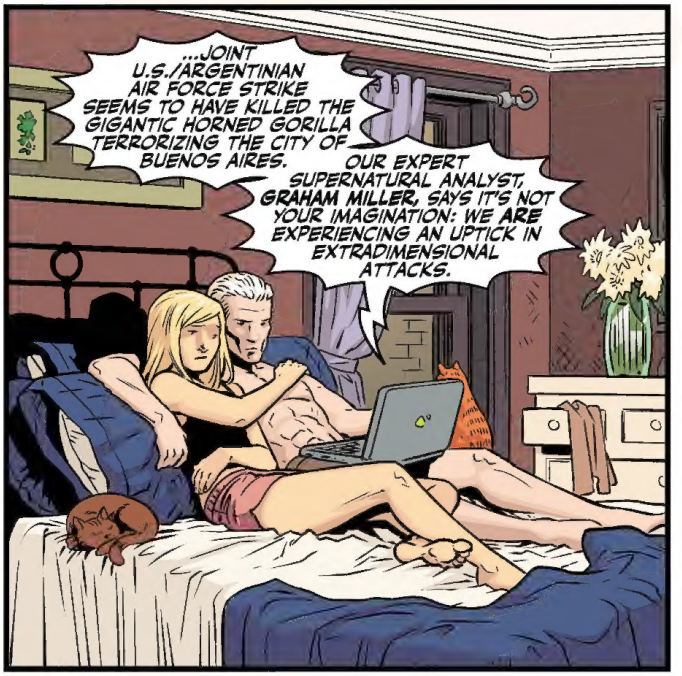
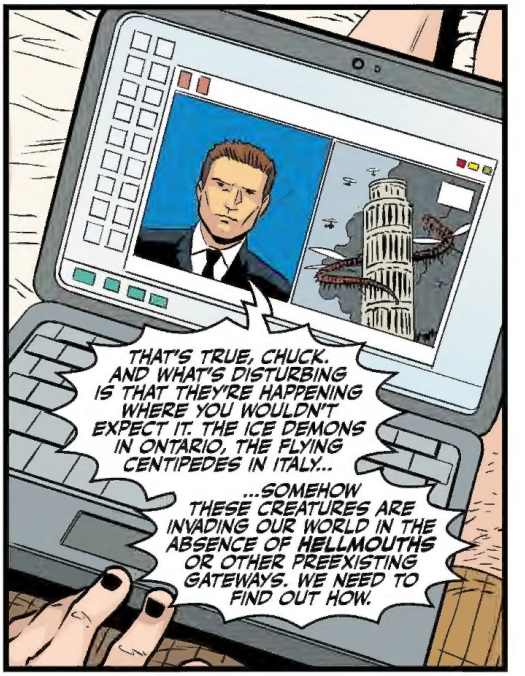
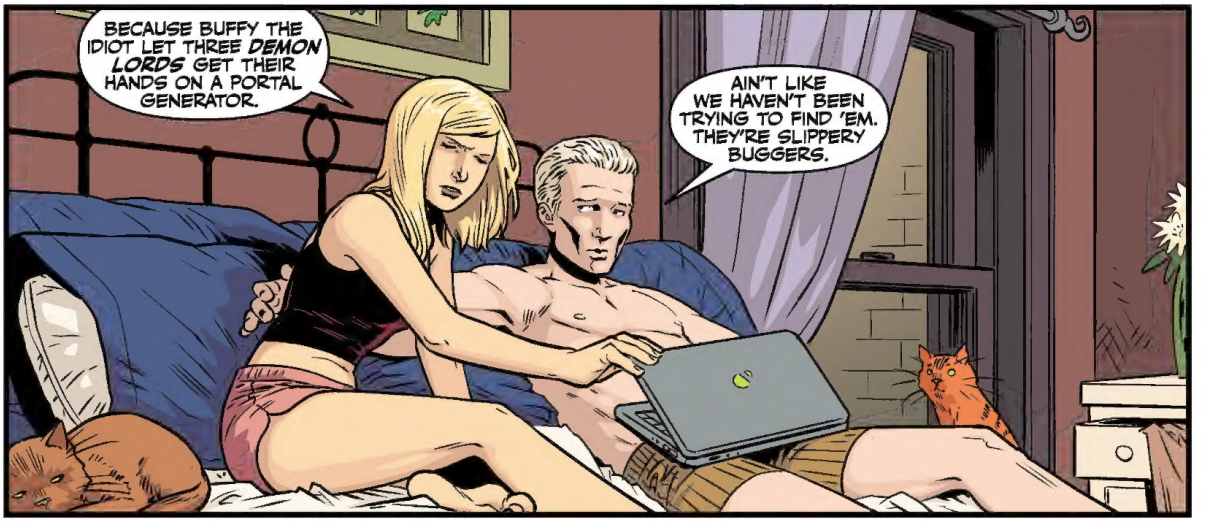
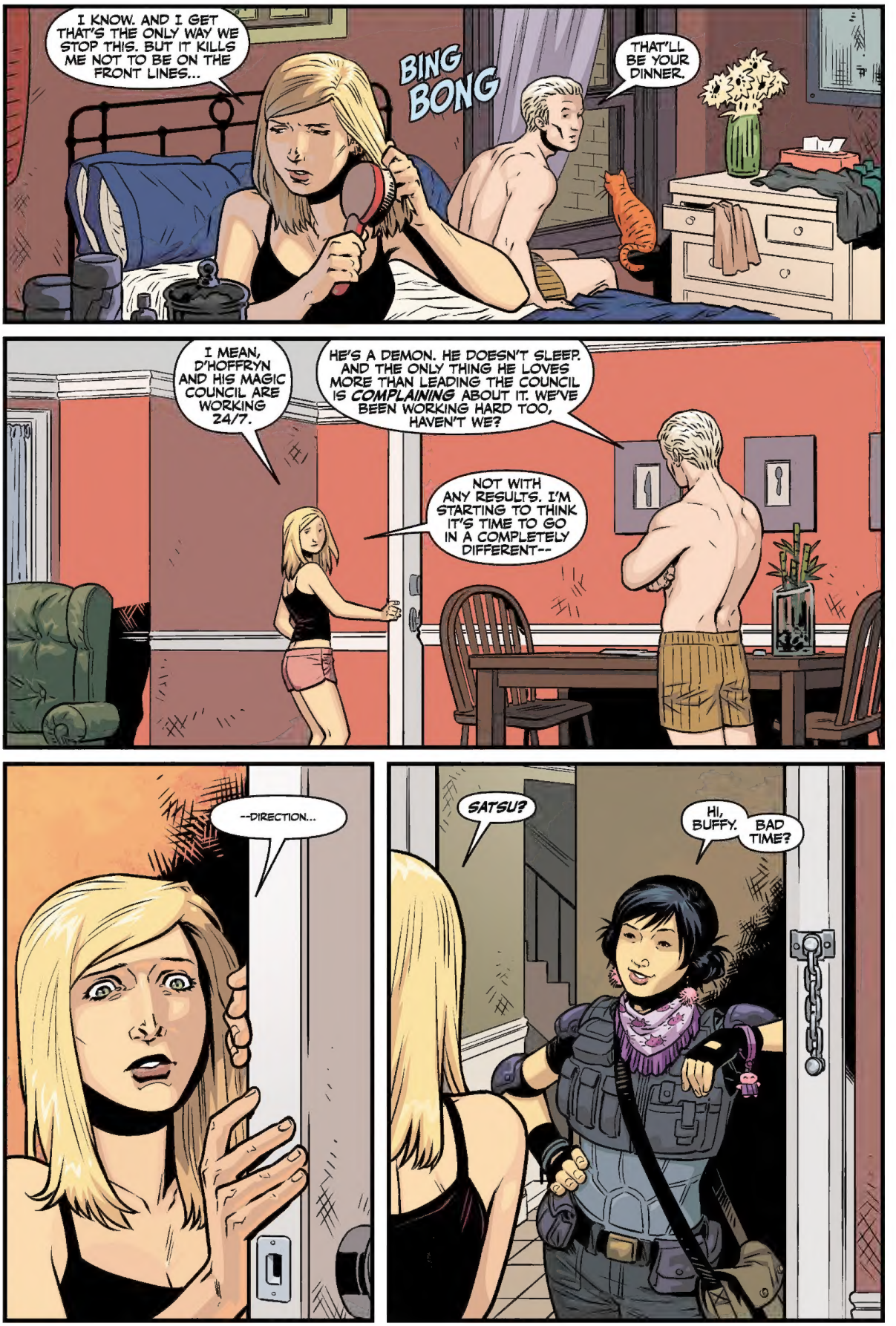

LIVE
MONSTER SIGHTINGS
IN PIECES ON THE GROUND
PART ONE

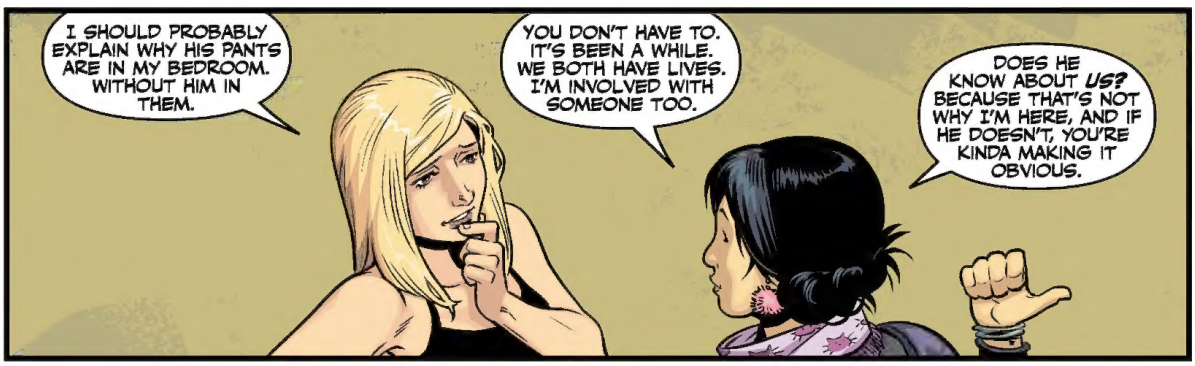

...JOINT U.S./ARGENTINIAN AIR FORCE STRIKE SEEMS TO HAVE KILLED THE GIGANTIC HORNED GORILLA TERRORIZING THE CITY OF BUENOS AIRES.
OUR EXPERT SUPERNATURAL ANALYST, GRAHAM MILLER, SAYS IT'S NOT YOUR IMAGINATION: WE ARE EXPERIENCING AN UPTICK IN EXTRADIMENSIONAL ATTACKS.


THAT'S TRUE, CHUCK. AND WHAT'S DISTURBING IS THAT THEY'RE HAPPENING WHERE YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT IT. THE ICE DEMONS IN ONTARIO, THE FLYING CENTIPEDES IN ITALY...
...SOMEHOW THESE CREATURES ARE INVADING OUR WORLD IN THE ABSENCE OF HELLMOUTHS OR OTHER PREEXISTING GATEWAYS. WE NEED TO FIND OUT HOW.


BECAUSE BUFFY THE IDIOT LET THREE DEMON LORDS GET THEIR HANDS ON A PORTAL GENERATOR.
AIN'T LIKE WE HAVEN'T BEEN TRYING TO FIND 'EM. THEY'RE SLIPPERY BUGGERS.


I KNOW. AND I GET THAT'S THE ONLY WAY WE STOP THIS. BUT IT KILLS ME NOT TO BE ON THE FRONT LINES...
BING BONG
THAT'LL BE YOUR DINNER.
I MEAN, D'HOFFRYN AND HIS MAGIC COUNCIL ARE WORKING 24/7.
HE'S A DEMON. HE DOESN'T SLEEP. AND THE ONLY THING HE LOVES MORE THAN LEADING THE COUNCIL IS COMPLAINING ABOUT IT. WE'VE BEEN WORKING HARD TOO, HAVEN'T WE?
NOT WITH ANY RESULTS. I'M STARTING TO THINK IT'S TIME TO GO IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT--
--DIRECTION...
SATSU?
HI, BUFFY.
BAD TIME?

NO! OF COURSE NOT! COME ON IN. UH, SPIKE, THIS IS SATSU, MY OLD... SLAYER...FRIEND.
I KNOW. WE MET DURING THAT TO-DO WITH THE SEED OF MAGIC. CHEERS, SATSU.
I'LL JUST GRAB ME TROUSERS, SHALL I?

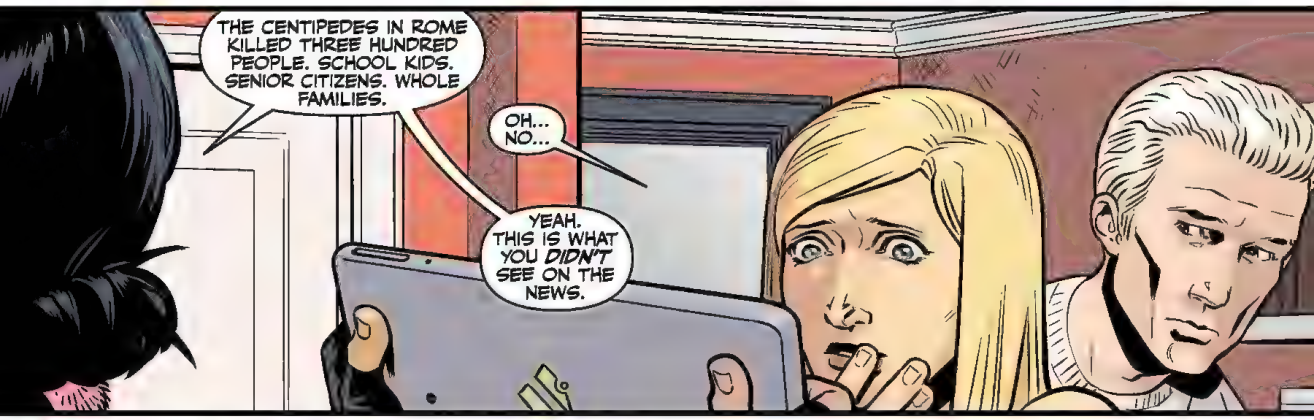

I SHOULD PROBABLY EXPLAIN WHY HIS PANTS ARE IN MY BEDROOM. WITHOUT HIM IN THEM.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO. IT'S BEEN A WHILE. WE BOTH HAVE LIVES. I'M INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE TOO.
DOES HE KNOW ABOUT US? BECAUSE THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE, AND IF HE DOESN'T, YOU'RE KINDA MAKING IT OBVIOUS.

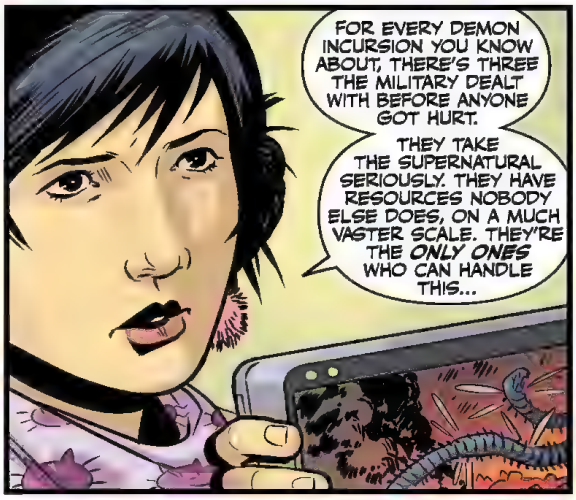
I DO INDEED, AND AM CERTAINLY NOT ONE TO HOLD YOUTHFUL EXPERIMENTATION AGAINST ANYONE. FEEL FREE TO SHARE STORIES IF YOU'D LIKE.
DO NOT FEEL FREE.
YOU BOTH SEEMED SO COOL AND MYSTERIOUS WHEN WE MET.

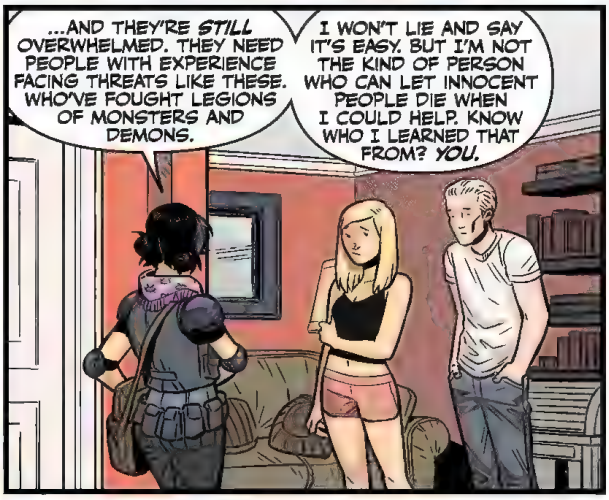
WAIT, SO WHY ARE YOU HERE? WITHOUT CALLING FIRST, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN THE CONSIDERATE AND FAR LESS EMBARRASSING THING TO DO?
SORRY FOR THAT. I KNEW THE ONLY WAY I'D GET TO FINISH WHAT I HAVE TO SAY IS IF I CAME IN PERSON. BUFFY, I WANT YOU...

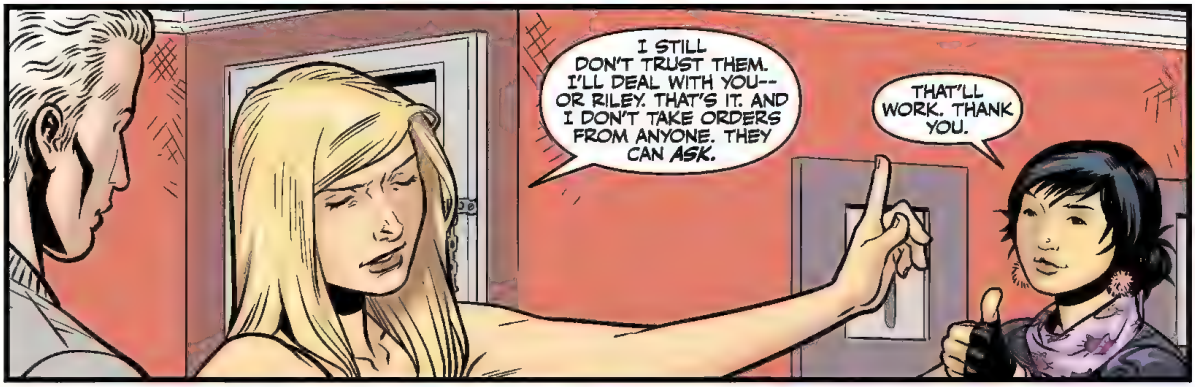
...TO HELP THE U.S. ARMY.

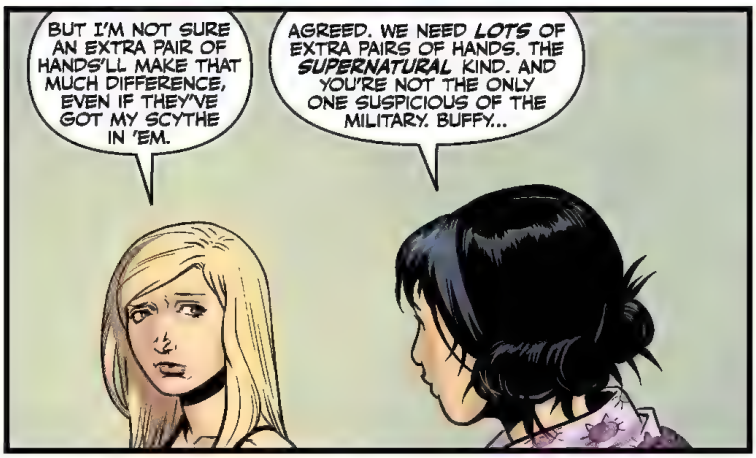
THE... ARMY.
THE "DECLARED SLAYERS AN ENEMY OF THE STATE AND WENT TO WAR AGAINST US AND KILLED A LOT OF OUR FRIENDS" ARMY.
I KNOW. BUT THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT POLICY ARE EITHER DEAD OR IN JAIL.
UH-HUH. WHAT ABOUT ALL THE ONES WHO ENTHUSIASTICALLY FOLLOWED THEIR ORDERS?
ONE: EVERYTHING YOU SAID ABOUT THE ARMY ALSO APPLIES TO ANGEL, AND I HEAR YOU FORGAVE HIM. AND DON'T GIVE ME THAT "HE WAS POSSESSED" LINE.
HE WAS! PART OF THE TIME! AND HE'S KIND OF GULLIBLE WHEN IT COMES TO DESTINY AND IS THE GOVERNMENT SPYING ON ME?
MORE WATCHING ANGEL. HE ALMOST DESTROYED THE WORLD. HE COMES INTO THE COUNTRY, CERTAIN PEOPLE PAY ATTENTION. BUT LOOK, PLEASE, JUST LET ME FINISH...
RILEY FINN IS WORKING FOR THE MILITARY AGAIN. HE WAS YOUR DOUBLE AGENT WHEN THEY WERE AGAINST US, BUT HE'S OKAY WITH THEM NOW. SHOULDN'T THAT COUNT FOR SOMETHING?
FAIR POINT. FINN'S MUCH LESS ONE FOR CROSSING MORAL LINES THAN WE ARE...I SHALL NOW STEP BACK AND PRETEND I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
THEY. KILLED. OUR. SISTERS. FRIENDS WHO DIED IN OUR ARMS. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, FORGOT THAT.
I HAVEN'T. I SEE THEM EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES.
SOMETIMES I WAKE UP AND FOR A SECOND I'M BACK IN TIBET...WATCHING KIDS WHO SHOULD BE AT THE HOMECOMING DANCE CHOKING TO DEATH ON THEIR OWN BLOOD.
BUT THAT'S IN THE PAST. AND THIS IS THE PRESENT.

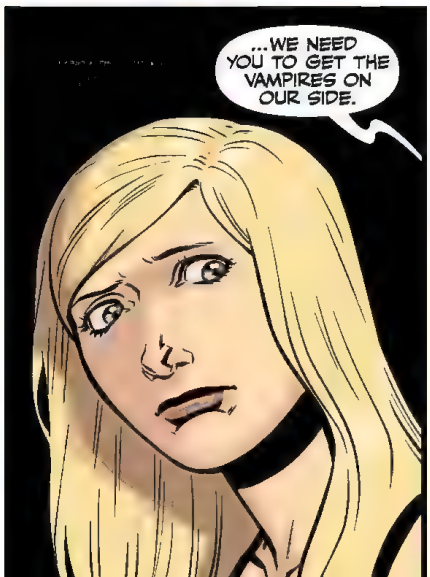

THE CENTIPEDES IN ROME KILLED THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE. SCHOOL KIDS. SENIOR CITIZENS. WHOLE FAMILIES.
OH... NO...
YEAH. THIS IS WHAT YOU *DIDN'T* SEE ON THE NEWS.


FOR EVERY DEMON INCURSION YOU KNOW ABOUT, THERE'S THREE THE MILITARY DEALT WITH BEFORE ANYONE GOT HURT.
THEY TAKE THE SUPERNATURAL SERIOUSLY. THEY HAVE RESOURCES NOBODY ELSE DOES, ON A MUCH VASTER SCALE. THEY'RE THE *ONLY ONES* WHO CAN HANDLE THIS...


...AND THEY'RE *STILL* OVERWHELMED. THEY NEED PEOPLE WITH EXPERIENCE FACING THREATS LIKE THESE. WHO'VE FOUGHT LEGIONS OF MONSTERS AND DEMONS.
I WON'T LIE AND SAY IT'S EASY. BUT I'M NOT THE KIND OF PERSON WHO CAN LET INNOCENT PEOPLE DIE WHEN I COULD HELP. KNOW WHO I LEARNED THAT FROM? *YOU.*

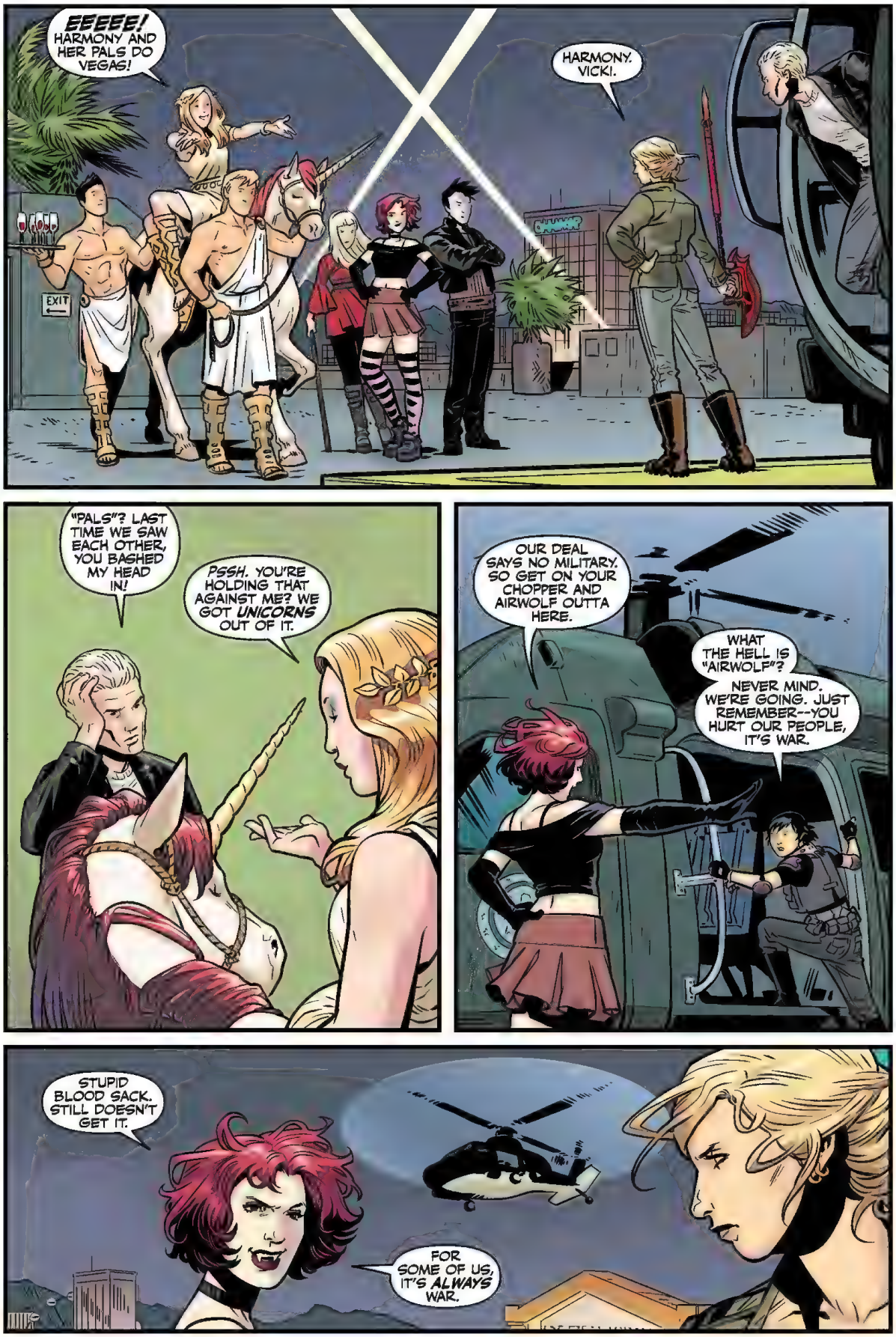

I STILL DON'T TRUST THEM. I'LL DEAL WITH YOU-- OR RILEY. THAT'S IT. AND I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM ANYONE. THEY CAN *ASK.*
THAT'LL WORK. THANK YOU.

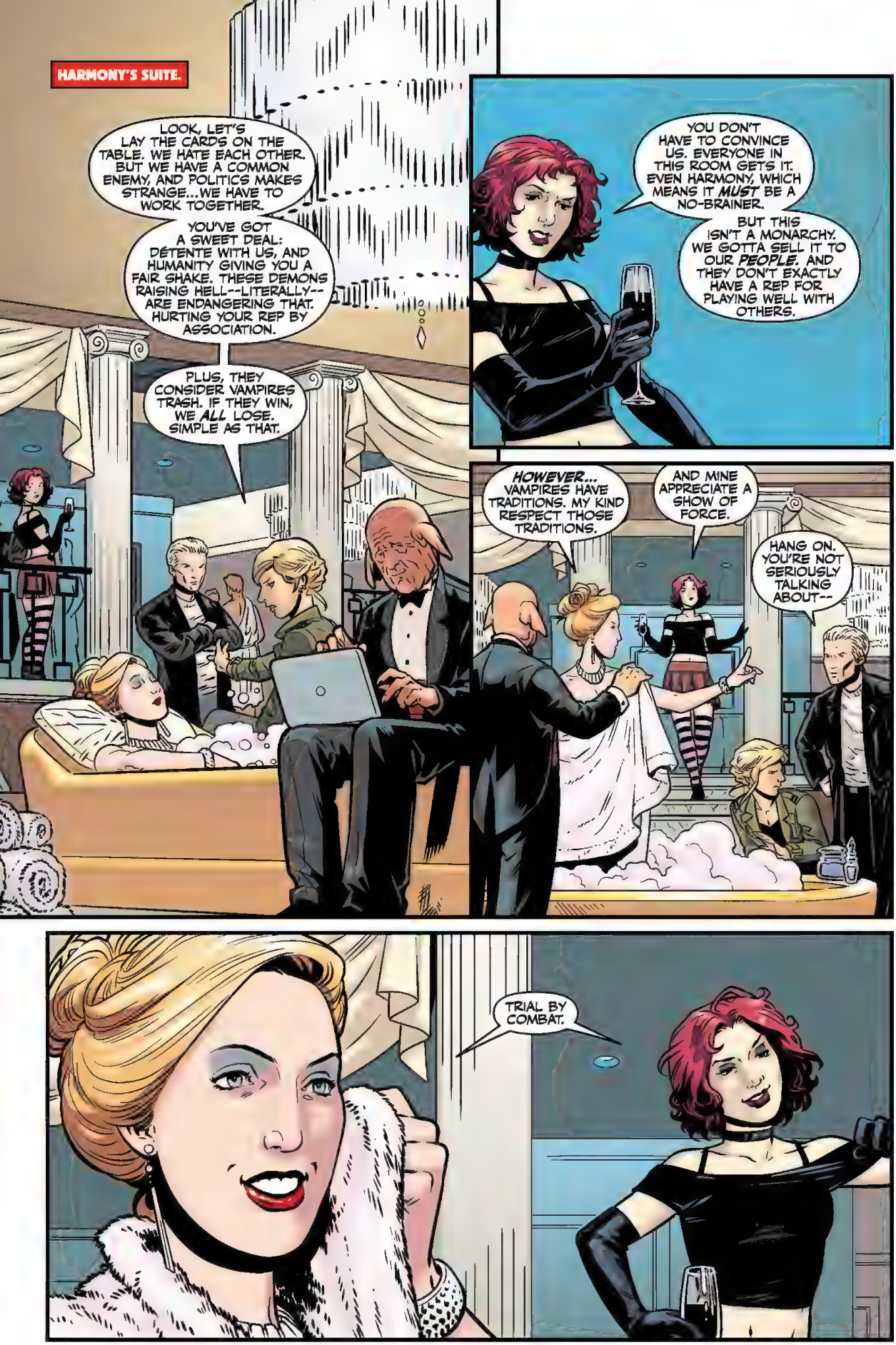

BUT I'M NOT SURE AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS'LL MAKE THAT MUCH DIFFERENCE, EVEN IF THEY'VE GOT MY SCYTHE IN 'EM.
AGREED. WE NEED *LOTS* OF EXTRA PAIRS OF HANDS. THE *SUPERNATURAL* KIND. AND YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE SUSPICIOUS OF THE MILITARY. BUFFY...

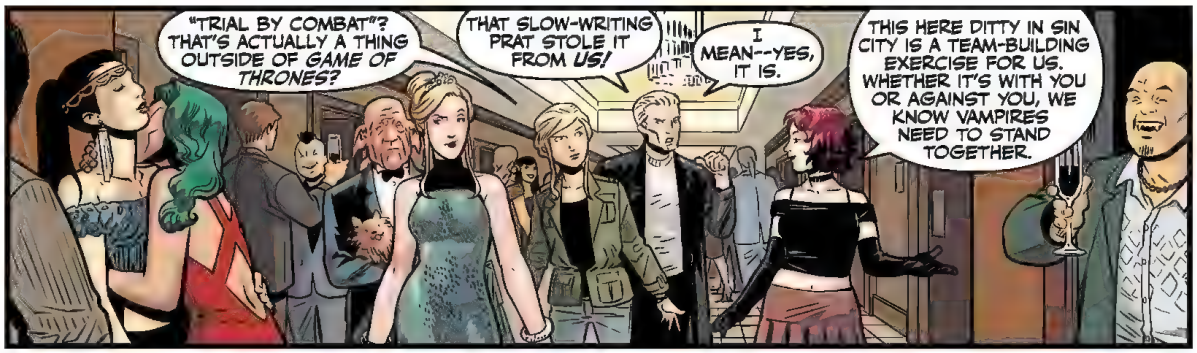

...WE NEED YOU TO GET THE VAMPIRES ON OUR SIDE.

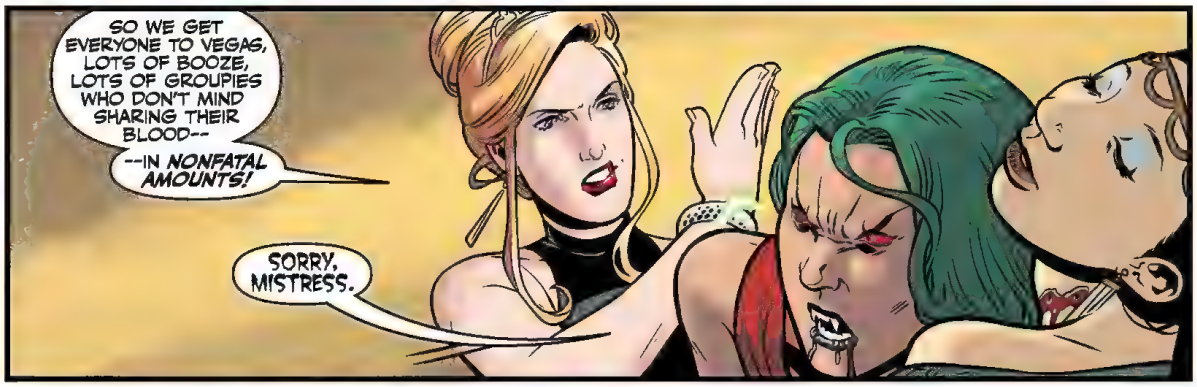
LATER, UPSTAIRS.
OUR WORLD HAS NATURALLY OCCURRING PORTALS IN FIXED LOCATIONS, WHERE THE BARRIER TO HELL DIMENSIONS IS WEAKER. HELLMOUTHS BEING THE PRIME EXAMPLE.
EVEN THERE, ONE REQUIRES A TOOL--A SPELL OR OTHER SOURCE OF MYSTIC ENERGY--TO PIERCE THE BARRIER. AND BECAUSE WE KNOW WHERE THESE PLACES ARE, WE CAN GUARD THEM.
THE RESTLESS DOOR IS OF CONCERN BECAUSE IT CAN OPEN PORTALS ANYWHERE. BETWEEN ANY TWO DIMENSIONS, IN ANY LOCATION.
BECAUSE THE RESTLESS DOOR WAS CREATED IN A HELL DIMENSION, IT IS NOT BOUND BY THE LAWS OF OUR REALITY.
OUR DEMON TRIUMVIRATE IS FILLING EARTH WITH CREATURES WHO OWE THEM A DEBT FOR MAKING THE JOURNEY POSSIBLE. THEY ARE SOLIDIFYING A VAST POWER BASE.
AND I BET THEY POP THROUGH THE ODD GIANT GORILLA TO KEEP US DISTRACTED. THANK YOU, GILES. THAT'S VERY HELPFUL.
YOU'RE ADORABLE LIKE THIS, BY THE WAY.
LOVELY. I NEVER TIRE OF ATTRACTIVE WOMEN REFERRING TO ME AS ONE WOULD A RED PANDA.
LOOK, I GET THAT THE VAMPIRES DON'T LIKE G.I.'S, BUT I'M BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER. NOT EVEN CLOSE TO MAKING THEIR "WOMEN WE LOVE" LIST.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY ASKED FOR YOU. YOU'RE THE DEVIL THEY KNOW...YOU'VE SEALED TREATIES WITH THEM BEFORE, WHICH IS MORE THAN THE ARMY CAN SAY.
WE NEED THEM ON OUR SIDE. THEIR MANPOWER AND DURABILITY WOULD MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE. ANYWAY, IT'S TOO LATE TO BACK OUT NOW...
WHUP WHUP WHUP
WHUP WH
...OUR RIDE'S HERE.

RECKON YOU KNOW THIS, BUT THERE'S TWO FACTIONS OF VAMPIRES THESE DAYS. OLD SCHOOL AND NEW BREED. BIT OF A RIVALRY.
YEAH. UNCLE SAM REACHED OUT TO BOTH. TOOK SOME DOING, BUT BOTH AGREED TO A ONE-TIME MEET. AND ONLY WITH YOU TWO.
NO OFFENSE, BUT IF I WAS THEM, I'D EXPECT TO GET NUKED. I HALF EXPECT IT MYSELF.
THEY'RE PRETTY SMART. THEY INSISTED IT TAKE PLACE SOMEWHERE PUBLIC, WITH LOTS OF CIVILIANS AROUND. HUMAN SHIELDS AGAINST AN ATTACK.
HUH. PRETTY CLEVER. WHOSE IDEA WAS--
BACCHANAL
RESORT & CASINO
Welcome
VampCon
HARMONY.

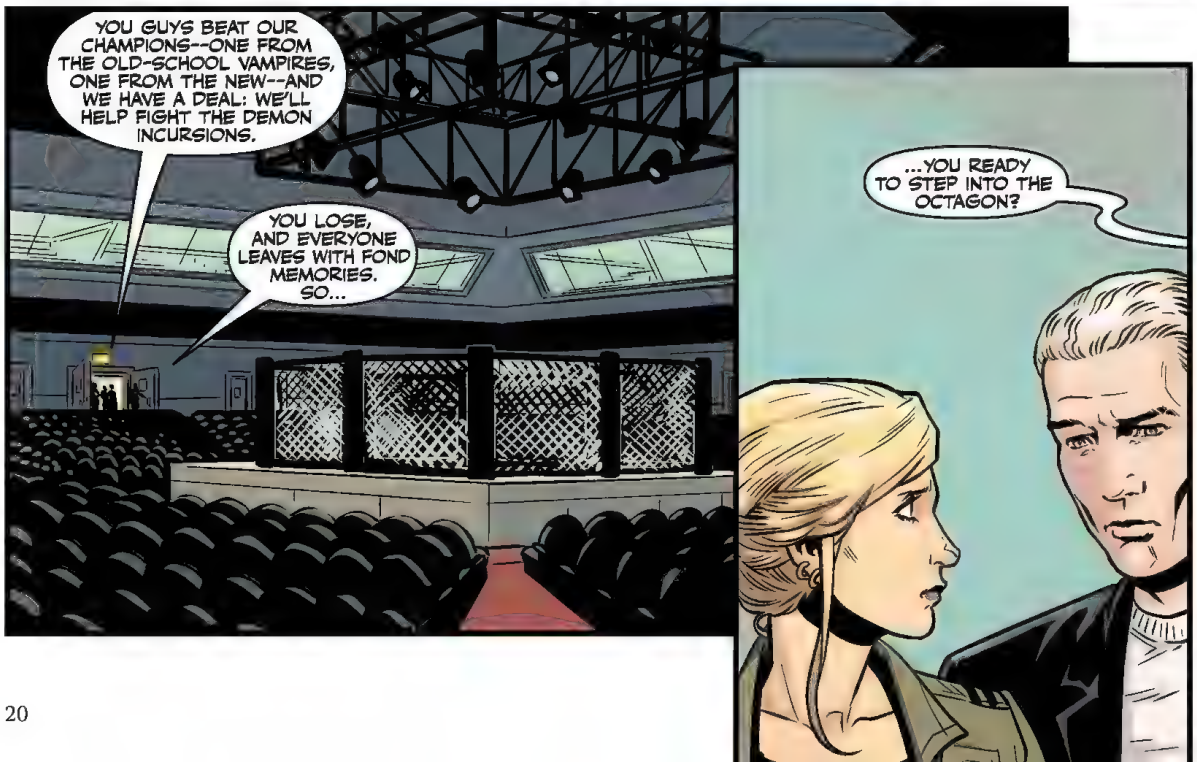

EEEEE! HARMONY AND HER PALS DO VEGAS!
HARMONY. VICKI.
EXIT
"PALS"? LAST TIME WE SAW EACH OTHER, YOU BASHED MY HEAD IN!
PSSH. YOU'RE HOLDING THAT AGAINST ME? WE GOT UNICORNS OUT OF IT.
OUR DEAL SAYS NO MILITARY. SO GET ON YOUR CHOPPER AND AIRWOLF OUTTA HERE.
WHAT THE HELL IS "AIRWOLF"?
NEVER MIND. WE'RE GOING. JUST REMEMBER--YOU HURT OUR PEOPLE, IT'S WAR.
STUPID BLOOD SACK. STILL DOESN'T GET IT.
FOR SOME OF US, IT'S ALWAYS WAR.

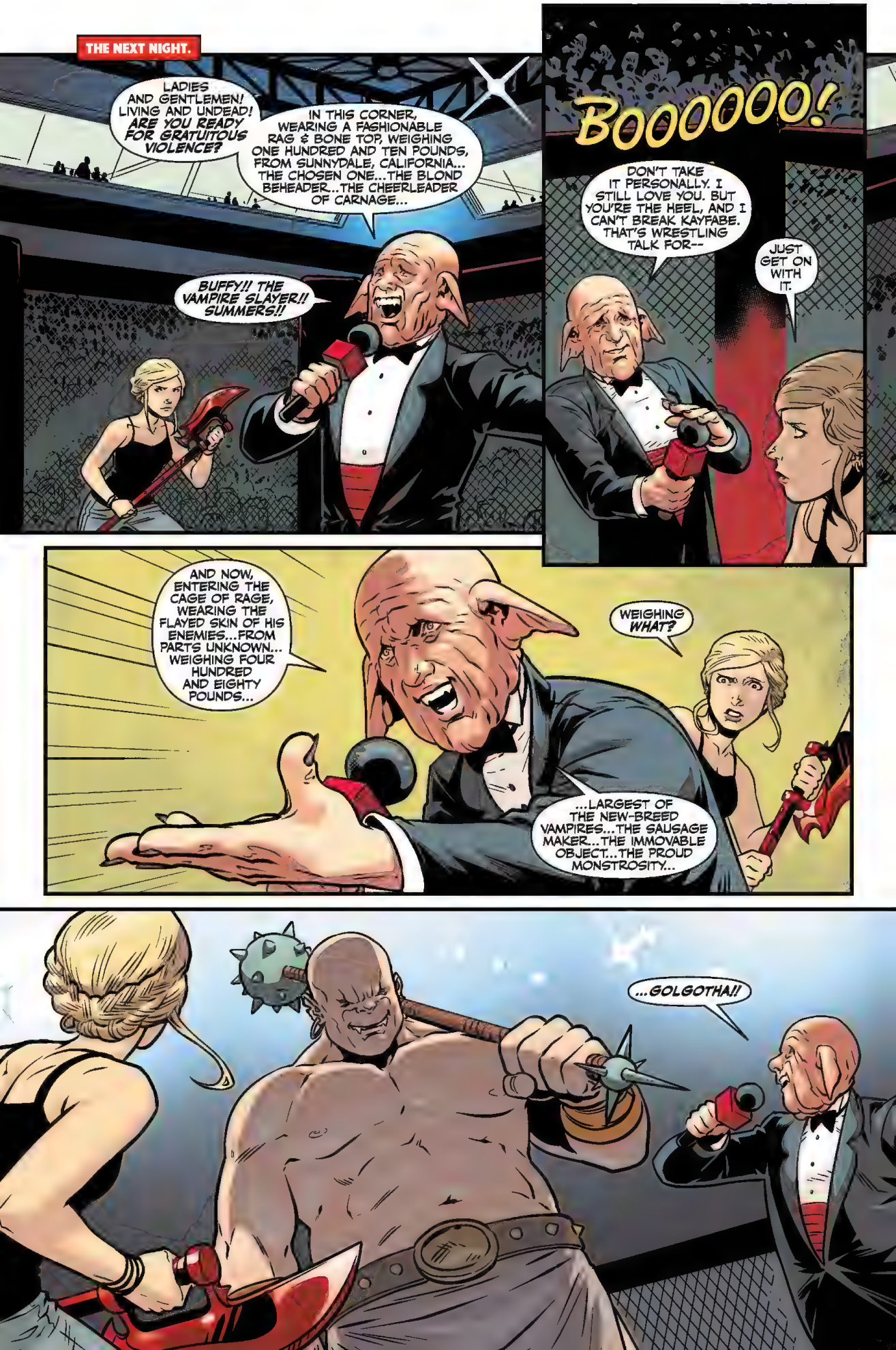

HARMONY'S SUITE.
LOOK, LET'S LAY THE CARDS ON THE TABLE. WE HATE EACH OTHER. BUT WE HAVE A COMMON ENEMY, AND POLITICS MAKES STRANGE...WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER.
YOU'VE GOT A SWEET DEAL: DÉTENTE WITH US, AND HUMANITY GIVING YOU A FAIR SHAKE. THESE DEMONS RAISING HELL--LITERALLY--ARE ENDANGERING THAT. HURTING YOUR REP BY ASSOCIATION.
PLUS, THEY CONSIDER VAMPIRES TRASH. IF THEY WIN, WE ALL LOSE. SIMPLE AS THAT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO CONVINCE US. EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM GETS IT. EVEN HARMONY, WHICH MEANS IT MUST BE A NO-BRAINER.
BUT THIS ISN'T A MONARCHY. WE GOTTA SELL IT TO OUR PEOPLE. AND THEY DON'T EXACTLY HAVE A REP FOR PLAYING WELL WITH OTHERS.
HOWEVER... VAMPIRES HAVE TRADITIONS. MY KIND RESPECT THOSE TRADITIONS.
AND MINE APPRECIATE A SHOW OF FORCE.
HANG ON. YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY TALKING ABOUT--
TRIAL BY COMBAT.


"TRIAL BY COMBAT"? THAT'S ACTUALLY A THING OUTSIDE OF *GAME OF THRONES*?
THAT SLOW-WRITING PRAT STOLE IT FROM *US!*
I MEAN--YES, IT IS.
THIS HERE DITTY IN SIN CITY IS A TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISE FOR US. WHETHER IT'S WITH YOU OR AGAINST YOU, WE KNOW VAMPIRES NEED TO STAND TOGETHER.

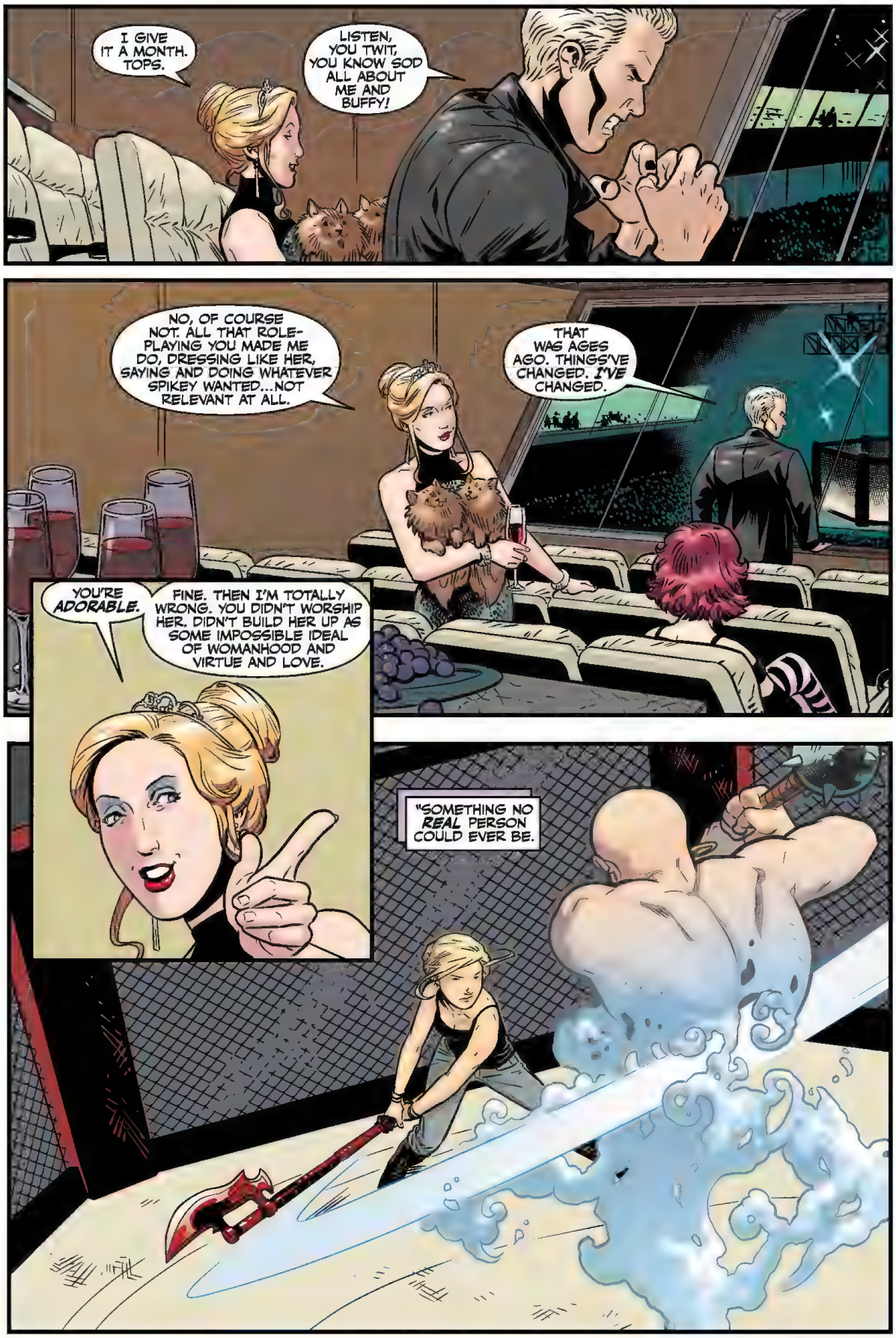

SO WE GET EVERYONE TO VEGAS, LOTS OF BOOZE, LOTS OF GROUPIES WHO DON'T MIND SHARING THEIR BLOOD--
--IN *NONFATAL AMOUNTS!*
SORRY, MISTRESS.

AND *ENTERTAINMENT.*
EXIT
BLOOD AND CIRCUSES.


YOU GUYS BEAT OUR CHAMPIONS--ONE FROM THE OLD-SCHOOL VAMPIRES, ONE FROM THE NEW--AND WE HAVE A DEAL: WE'LL HELP FIGHT THE DEMON INCURSIONS.
YOU LOSE, AND EVERYONE LEAVES WITH FOND MEMORIES. SO...
...YOU READY TO STEP INTO THE OCTAGON?


THE NEXT NIGHT.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! LIVING AND UNDEAD! ARE YOU READY FOR GRATUITOUS VIOLENCE?
IN THIS CORNER, WEARING A FASHIONABLE RAG & BONE TOP, WEIGHING ONE HUNDRED AND TEN POUNDS, FROM SUNNYDALE, CALIFORNIA... THE CHOSEN ONE...THE BLOND BEHEADER...THE CHEERLEADER OF CARNAGE...
BUFFY!! THE VAMPIRE SLAYER!! SUMMERS!!
BOOOOOO!
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY. I STILL LOVE YOU. BUT YOU'RE THE HEEL, AND I CAN'T BREAK KAYFABE. THAT'S WRESTLING TALK FOR--
JUST GET ON WITH IT.
AND NOW, ENTERING THE CAGE OF RAGE, WEARING THE FLAYED SKIN OF HIS ENEMIES...FROM PARTS UNKNOWN... WEIGHING FOUR HUNDRED AND EIGHTY POUNDS...
WEIGHING WHAT?
...LARGEST OF THE NEW-BREED VAMPIRES...THE SAUSAGE MAKER...THE IMMOVABLE OBJECT...THE PROUD MONSTROSITY...
...GOLGOTHA!!

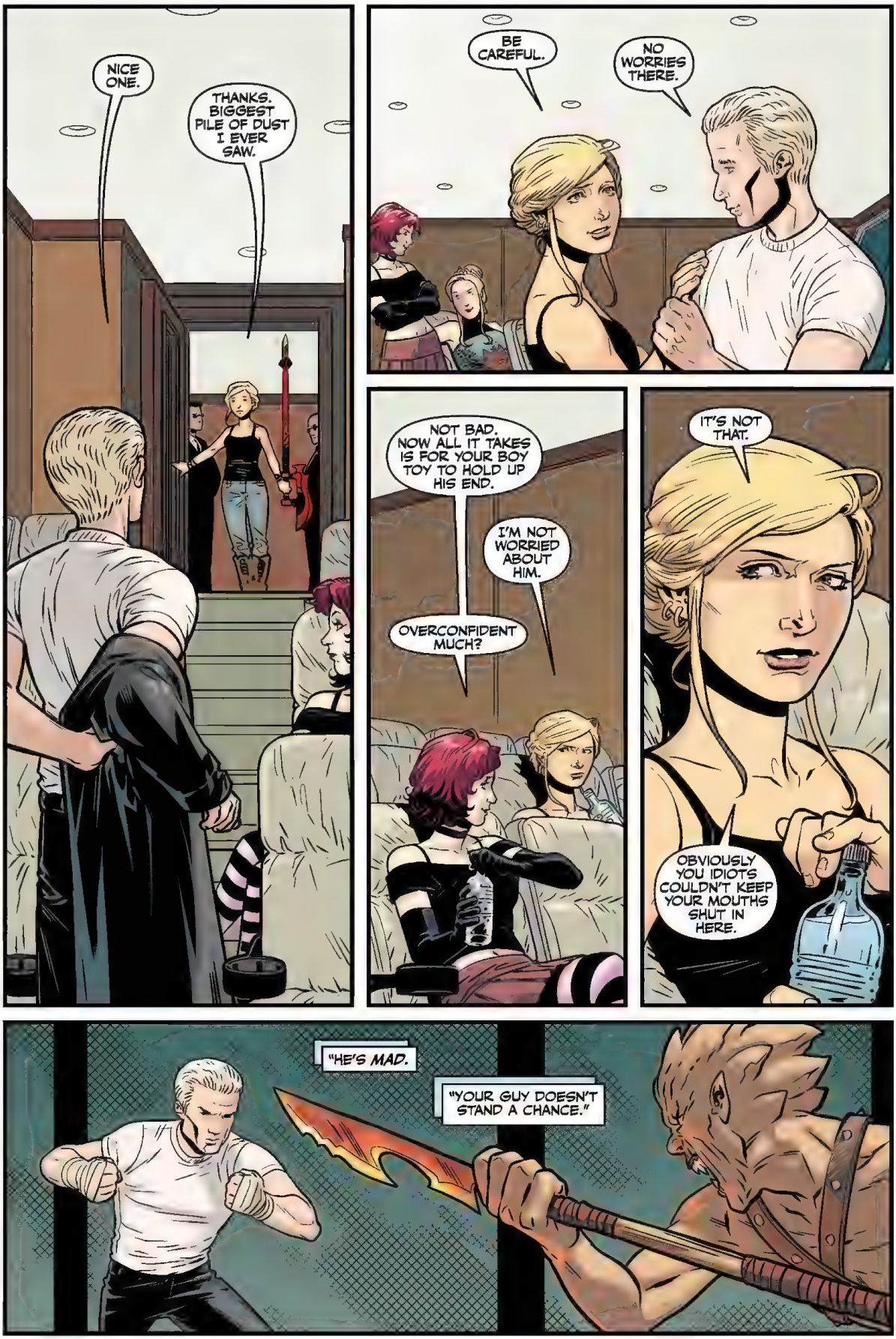
FINE. I'M THE BAD GUY HERE?
SAY HELLO TO THE BAD GUY.
KERRANNNGG
SO. THE TWO OF YOU, HUH? BLONDIE BEAR FINALLY WON HIS FAIR PRINCESS. DON'T BOTHER DENYING IT. I CAN SMELL YOU ON EACH OTHER.
I THINK IT'S ADORABLE. REALLY. NEW TERRITORY FOR YOU, HMM? HOW'S IT GOING NOW THAT ONE OF YOUR UNREQUITED LOVES FINALLY DECIDED TO REQUITE?
IT'S GOING FINE. NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF YOUR BLOODY BUSINESS.
HAH. RIGHT. LOOK AT HER.
YOU CAN'T HANDLE A WOMAN LIKE THAT.


I GIVE IT A MONTH. TOPS.
LISTEN, YOU TWIT, YOU KNOW SOD ALL ABOUT ME AND BUFFY!
NO, OF COURSE NOT. ALL THAT ROLE-PLAYING YOU MADE ME DO, DRESSING LIKE HER, SAYING AND DOING WHATEVER SPIKEY WANTED...NOT RELEVANT AT ALL.
THAT WAS AGES AGO. THINGS'VE CHANGED. I'VE CHANGED.
YOU'RE ADORABLE.
FINE. THEN I'M TOTALLY WRONG. YOU DIDN'T WORSHIP HER. DIDN'T BUILD HER UP AS SOME IMPOSSIBLE IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD AND VIRTUE AND LOVE.
"SOMETHING NO REAL PERSON COULD EVER BE.

"YOU'RE NOT STARTING TO UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH OF WHAT YOU LOVED WAS A FANTASY...
"...NOW THAT REALITY'S CRASHING DOWN ON YOU."
NOT THAT I THINK YOU'D EVER ADMIT IT IF I WAS RIGHT. EVEN TO YOURSELF.
WILL YOU BLOODY SHUT UP?
I KNOW YOU TOO WELL.

"YOU'LL JUST DO THINGS TO PUSH HER AWAY.
TO MAKE HER UNHAPPY. HURT HER.
"SO SHE'S THE ONE WHO ENDS IT."
PAFT

THEN YOU CAN PLAY THE MARTYR. THE HEARTBROKEN ROMANTIC, REJECTED BY THE WOMAN HE LOVED.
LIKE YOU DID WITH DRUSILLA. AND THAT MEDIEVAL BROAD YOU KEPT AN OLD PICTURE OF FROM WHEN YOU WERE HUMAN...OH YEAH, I WENT THROUGH YOUR THINGS AND FOUND IT TUCKED INTO YOUR POETRY BOOK.
COULDN'T QUITE MAKE OUT THE NAME WRITTEN ON IT...CECILIA?
THAT'S ENOUGH!
YOU'RE WRONG! YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ME AND YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT US!
AND I SWEAR, IF YOU DON'T BLOODY WELL SHUT YOUR MOUTH, I WILL SHUT IT FOR YOU!
EASY, BOYS. HE'S JUST THE SENSITIVE TYPE.
BUT HE KNOWS HE NEEDS TO SAVE IT FOR THE RING.
"CAUSE THE LITTLE WOMAN JUST WON HER ROUND."


NICE ONE.
THANKS. BIGGEST PILE OF DUST I EVER SAW.
BE CAREFUL.
NO WORRIES THERE.
NOT BAD. NOW ALL IT TAKES IS FOR YOUR BOY TOY TO HOLD UP HIS END.
I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT HIM.
OVERCONFIDENT MUCH?
IT'S NOT THAT.
OBVIOUSLY YOU IDIOTS COULDN'T KEEP YOUR MOUTHS SHUT IN HERE.
"HE'S MAD.
"YOUR GUY DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE."

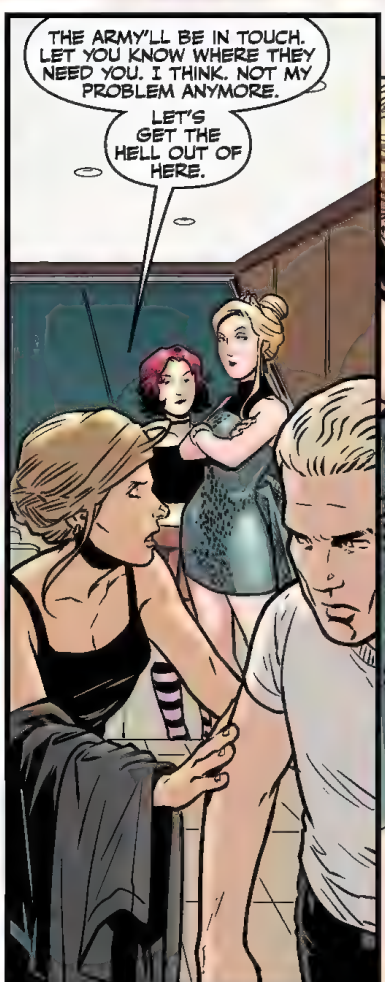
THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE A POINT. LOOK AT HIM.
"YOU CAN TAKE THE VAMP OUT OF THE CRYPT...
"...BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE THE MONSTER OUT OF THE VAMP."
KRRAKKT
DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME TRYING TO CAUSE PROBLEMS BETWEEN US. IT WON'T WORK.
OH, HONEY, I DON'T NEED TO WASTE MY TIME DOING THAT. I'VE BEEN STUDYING UP ON YOU.
YOU'LL KICK HIM TO THE CURB IN YOUR OWN SWEET TIME.

YOU'RE THE KINDA GAL WHO WANTS WHAT YOU CAN'T HAVE AND GETS BORED WITH WHAT YOU CAN, AM I RIGHT? LUCKY FOR YOU, THERE'S AN EASY OUT.
"JUST PRETEND TO BE ALL SHOCKED WHEN HE STARTS ACTING LIKE WHAT HE IS.
"SAY HE'S TURNED EVIL, STAB HIM, AND SEND HIM TO HELL."
OOH, NICE...TWIST HIM INTO THAT SHAPE AND LET HIM HEAL THAT WAY. WE'LL HAVE TO BREAK EVERY BONE IN HIS BODY JUST TO UNRAVEL HIM. MMM, I'M GETTING THE VAPORS.
OH--*YOU* SHOULD FOCUS ON THE FACT THAT BLONDIE BEAR DIDN'T DUST HIM. TELL YOURSELF IT'S BECAUSE HE'S A *GOOD GUY* NOW.

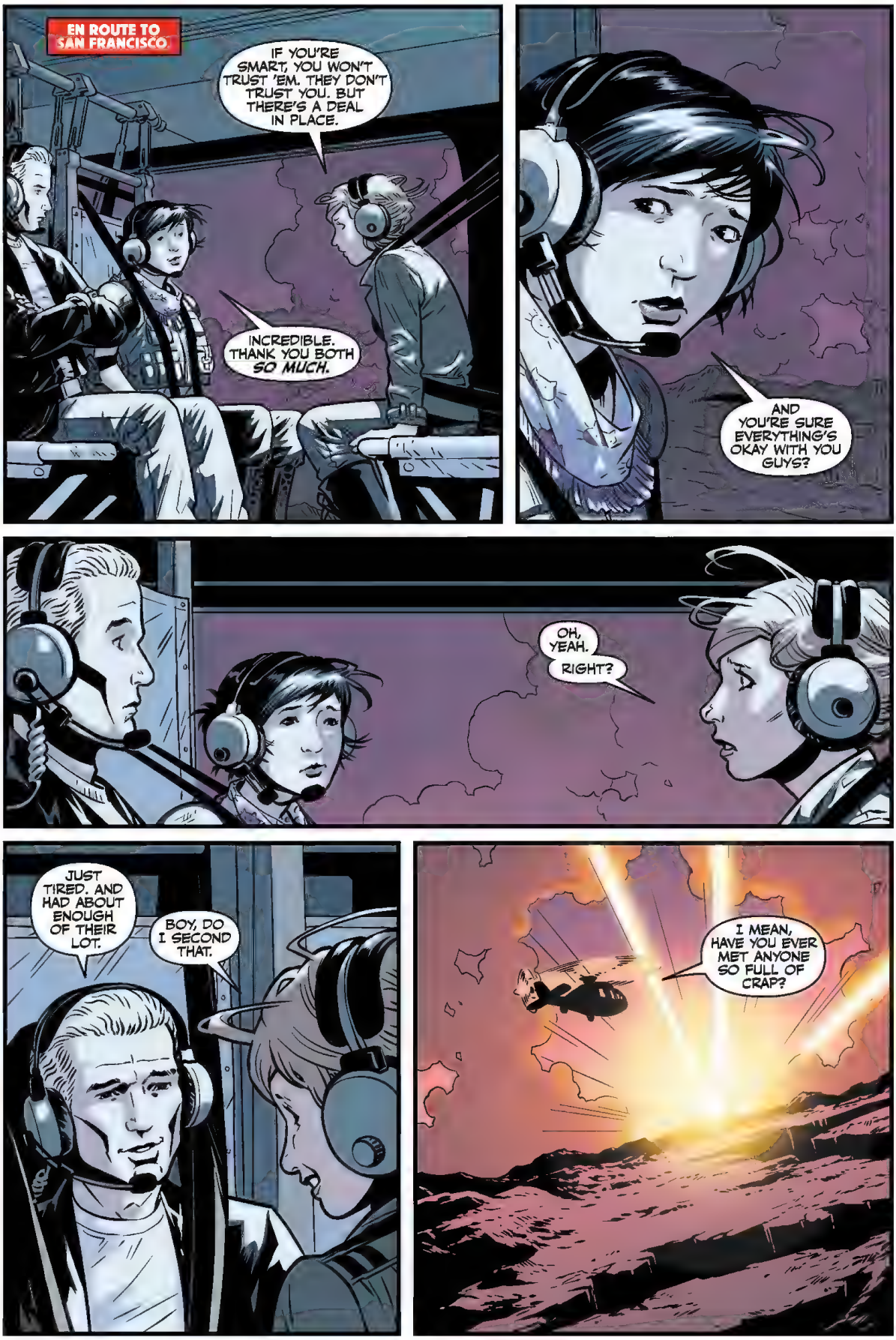
BUT SERIOUSLY, AREN'T YOU GETTING A LITTLE *OLD* TO STILL BE INTO THE TORTURED BAD BOY? HAVEN'T YOU OUTGROWN THAT DRAMA YET?
ALL RIGHT, TRUCE OR NO TRUCE, YOU SHUT THAT MOUTH OR I'LL SHOVE A STAKE IN IT.

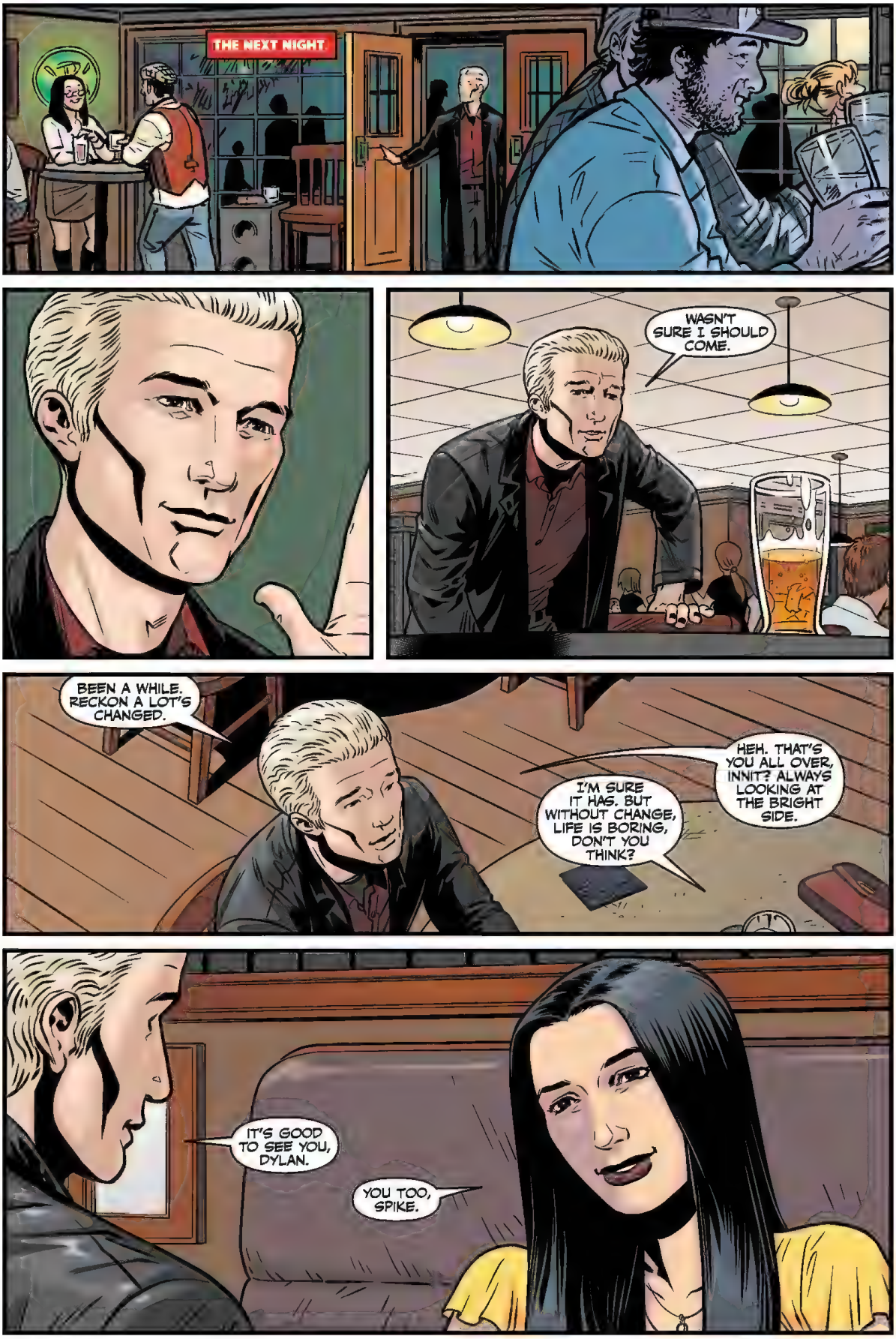
OH, NO NEED TO BE RUDE.
YOUR BOO GOT THE VICTORY. WE HAVE A DEAL. SHAKE ON IT?

ALL RIGHT?
SURE. WE WON.

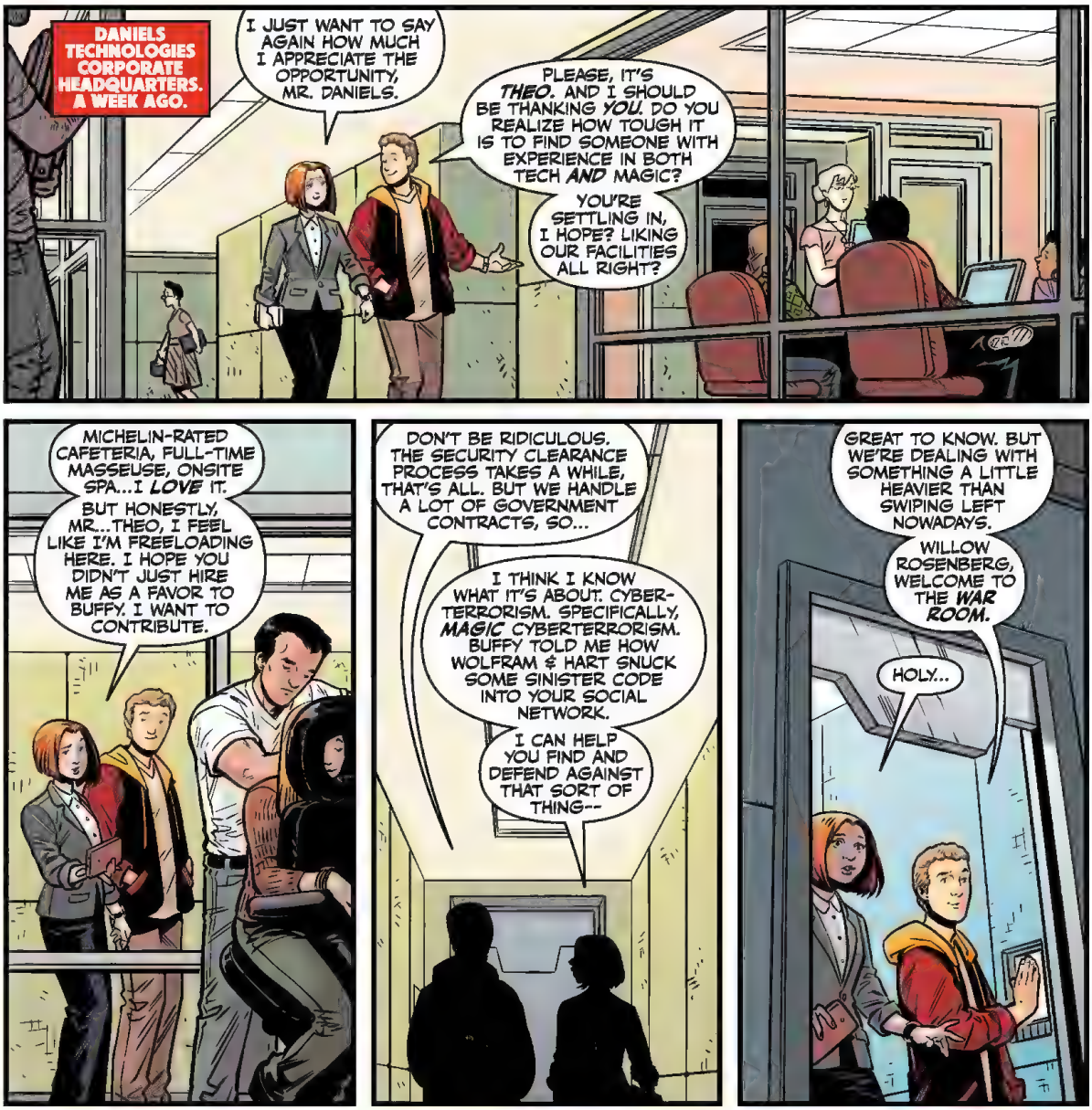

THE ARMY'LL BE IN TOUCH. LET YOU KNOW WHERE THEY NEED YOU. I THINK. NOT MY PROBLEM ANYMORE.
LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

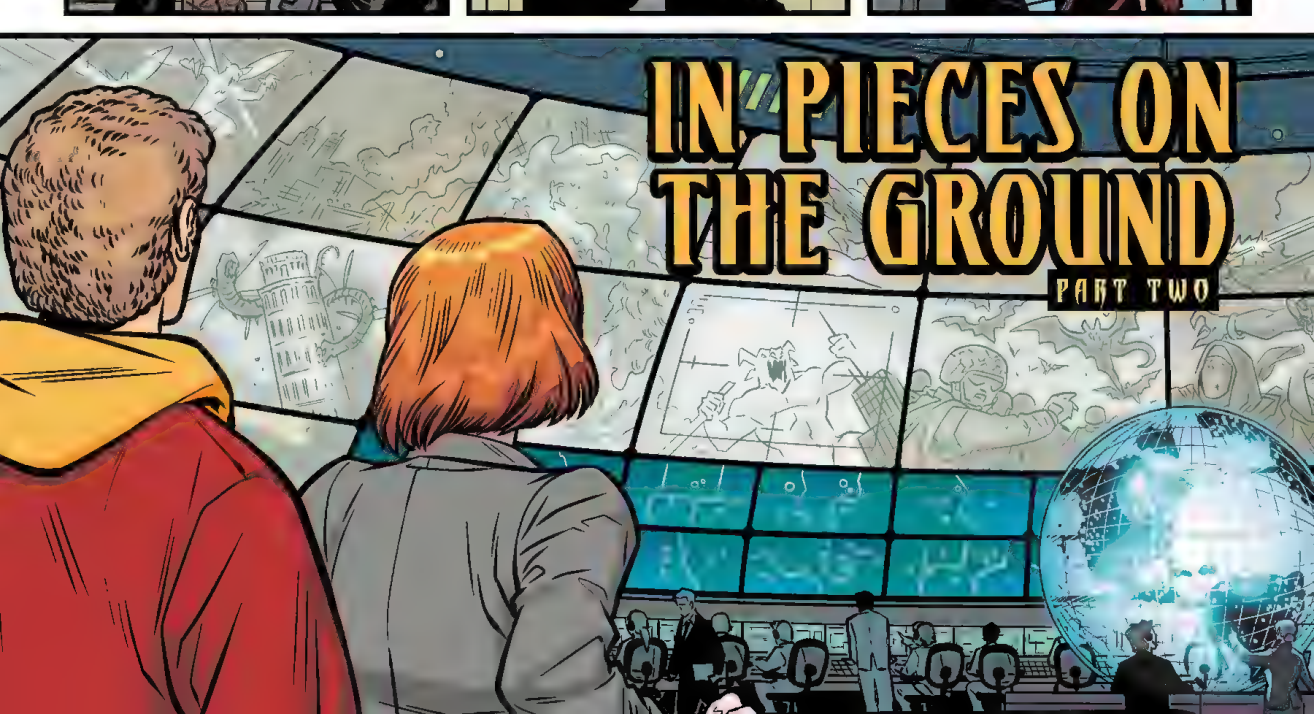
HIGH-FIVE, GIRL. WE MAKE PRETTY GOOD PARTNERS AFTER ALL, DON'T WE?
ODDLY ENOUGH, WE DO. THIS "VAMPIRE UNITY" THING MIGHT JUST WORK OUT...

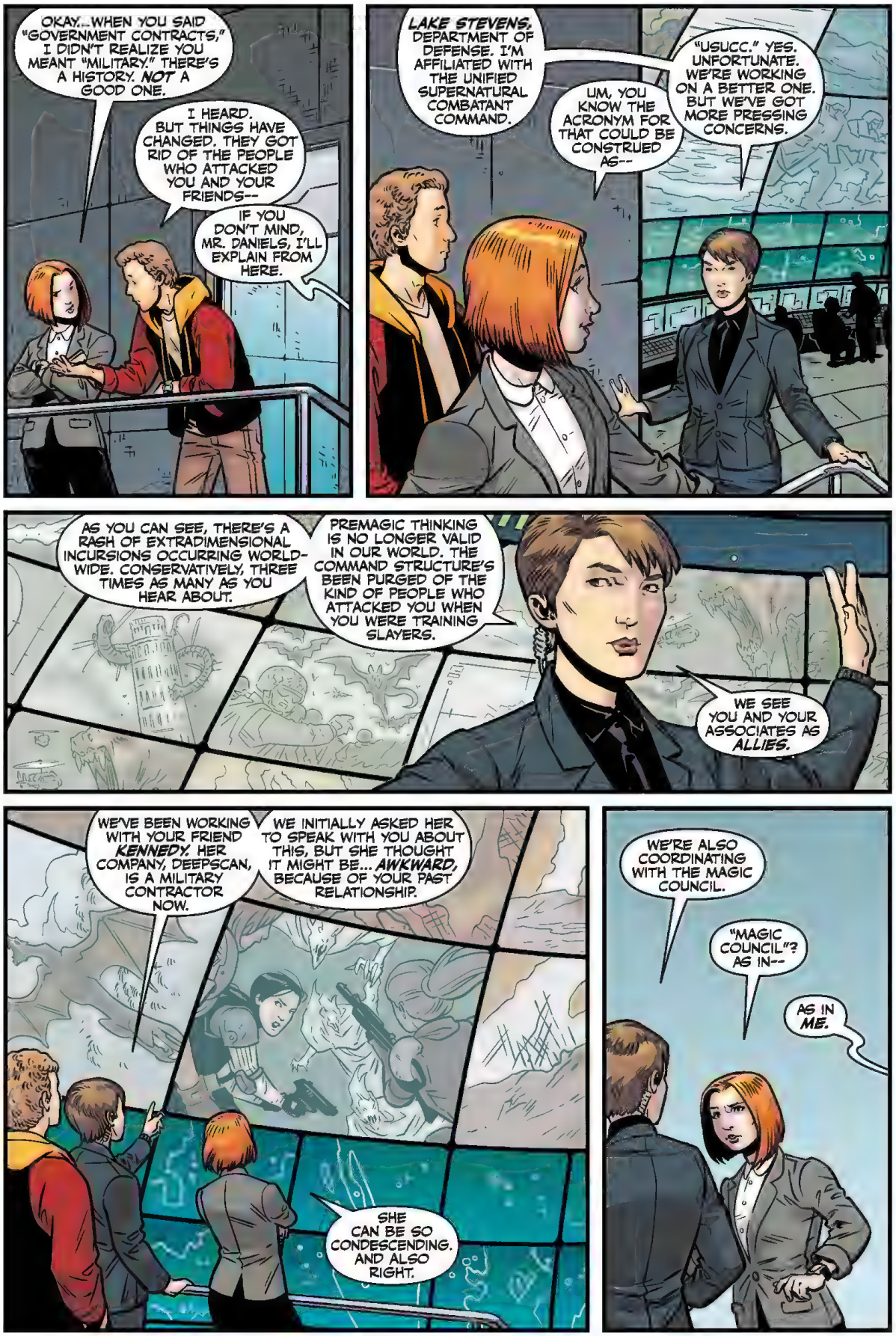

EN ROUTE TO SAN FRANCISCO
IF YOU'RE SMART, YOU WON'T TRUST 'EM. THEY DON'T TRUST YOU. BUT THERE'S A DEAL IN PLACE.
INCREDIBLE. THANK YOU BOTH SO MUCH.
AND YOU'RE SURE EVERYTHING'S OKAY WITH YOU GUYS?
OH, YEAH.
RIGHT?
JUST TIRED. AND HAD ABOUT ENOUGH OF THEIR LOT.
BOY, DO I SECOND THAT.
I MEAN, HAVE YOU EVER MET ANYONE SO FULL OF CRAP?


THE NEXT NIGHT.
WASN'T SURE I SHOULD COME.
BEEN A WHILE. RECKON A LOT'S CHANGED.
I'M SURE IT HAS. BUT WITHOUT CHANGE, LIFE IS BORING, DON'T YOU THINK?
HEH. THAT'S YOU ALL OVER, INNIT? ALWAYS LOOKING AT THE BRIGHT SIDE.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, DYLAN.
YOU TOO, SPIKE.

My First
Spellery
Primer for
phytes and
Nerbs

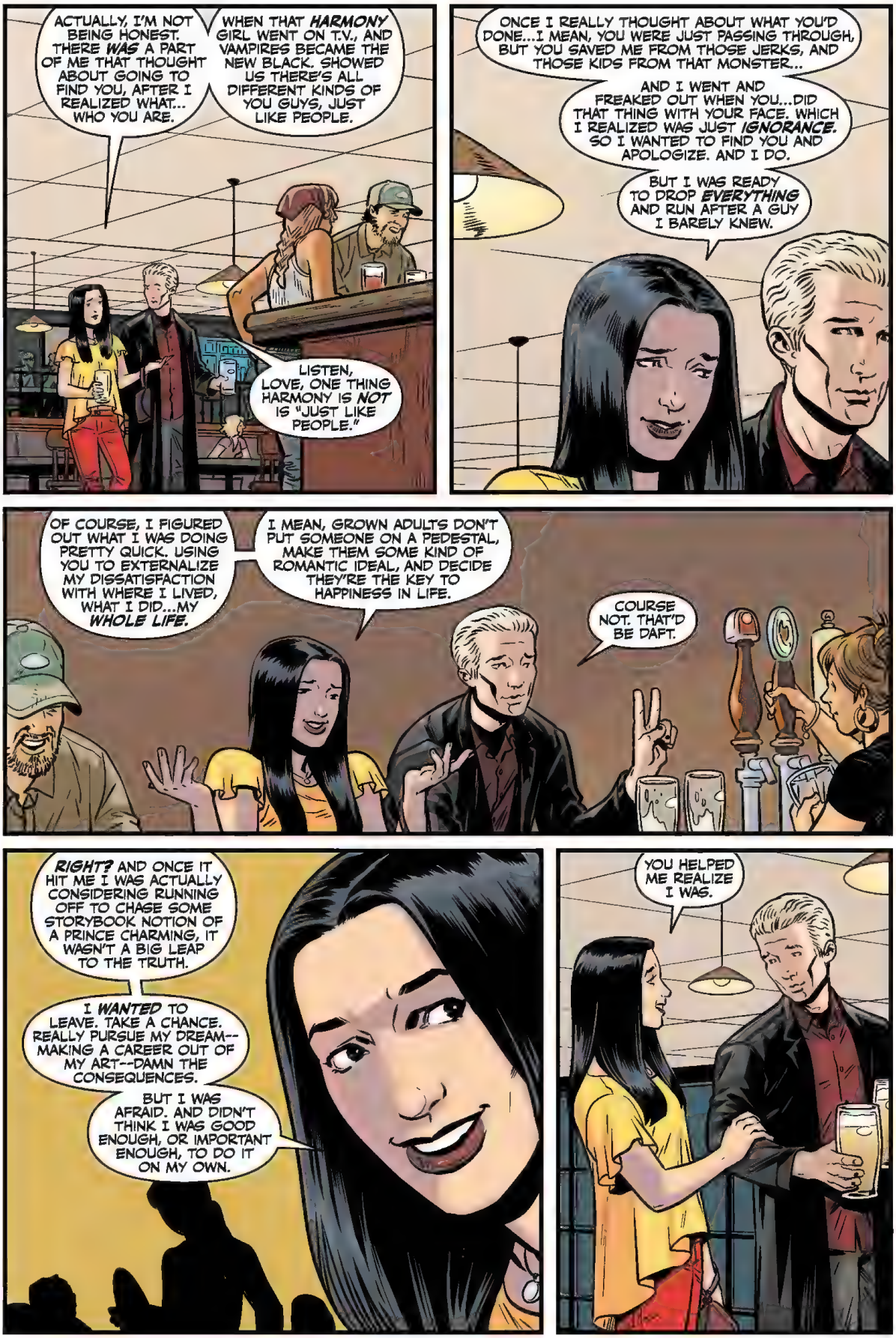

DANIELS TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS. A WEEK AGO.
I JUST WANT TO SAY AGAIN HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY, MR. DANIELS.
PLEASE, IT'S THEO. AND I SHOULD BE THANKING YOU. DO YOU REALIZE HOW TOUGH IT IS TO FIND SOMEONE WITH EXPERIENCE IN BOTH TECH AND MAGIC?
YOU'RE SETTLING IN, I HOPE? LIKING OUR FACILITIES ALL RIGHT?
MICHELIN-RATED CAFETERIA, FULL-TIME MASSEUSE, ONSITE SPA...I LOVE IT.
BUT HONESTLY, MR...THEO, I FEEL LIKE I'M FREELOADING HERE. I HOPE YOU DIDN'T JUST HIRE ME AS A FAVOR TO BUFFY. I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. THE SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS TAKES A WHILE, THAT'S ALL. BUT WE HANDLE A LOT OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, SO...
I THINK I KNOW WHAT IT'S ABOUT. CYBER-TERRORISM. SPECIFICALLY, MAGIC CYBERTERRORISM. BUFFY TOLD ME HOW WOLFRAM & HART SNUCK SOME SINISTER CODE INTO YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK.
I CAN HELP YOU FIND AND DEFEND AGAINST THAT SORT OF THING--
GREAT TO KNOW. BUT WE'RE DEALING WITH SOMETHING A LITTLE HEAVIER THAN SWIPING LEFT NOWADAYS.
WILLOW ROSENBERG, WELCOME TO THE WAR ROOM.
HOLY...


IN PIECES ON THE GROUND
PART TWO

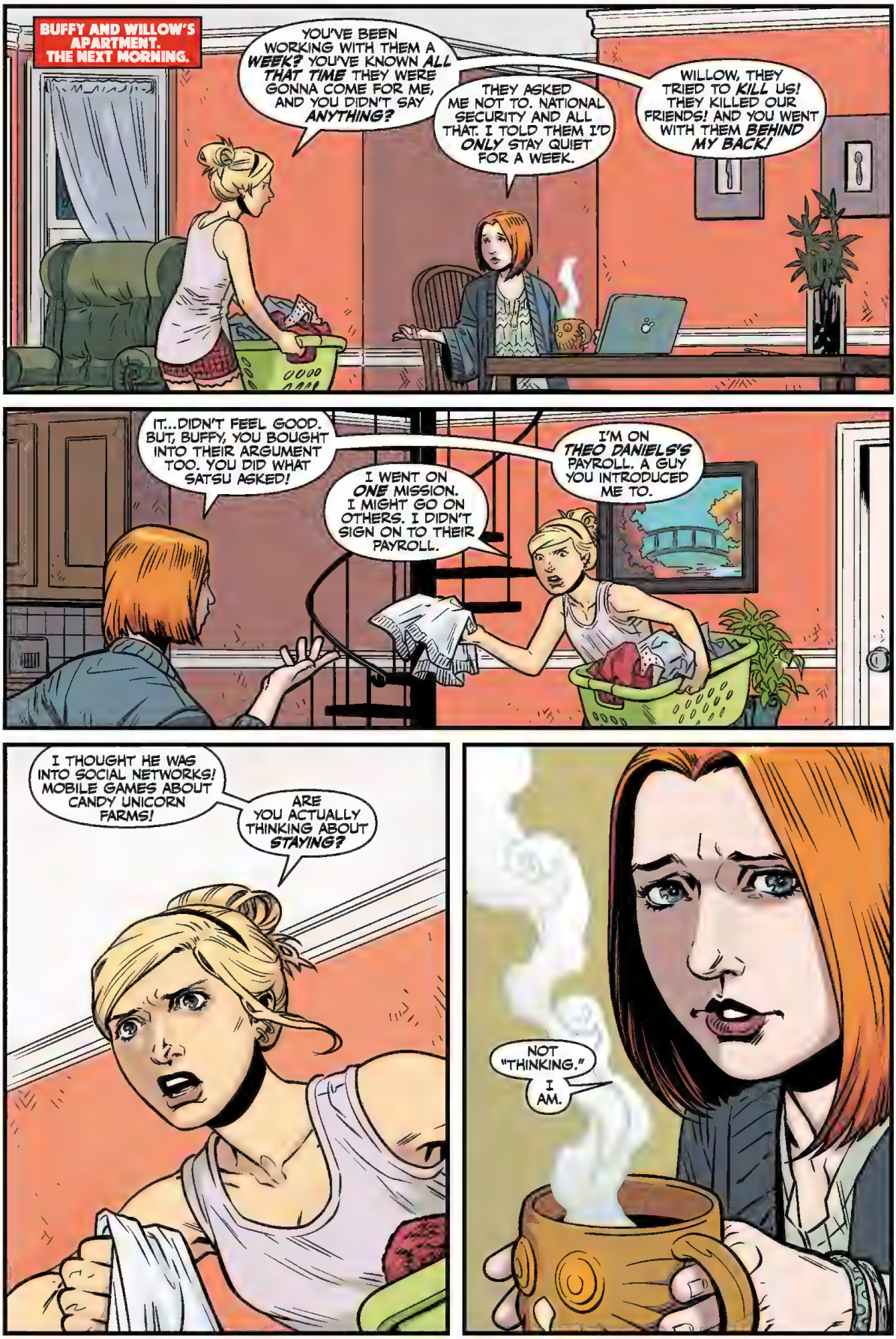

OKAY...WHEN YOU SAID "GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS," I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU MEANT "MILITARY." THERE'S A HISTORY. NOT A GOOD ONE.
I HEARD. BUT THINGS HAVE CHANGED. THEY GOT RID OF THE PEOPLE WHO ATTACKED YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS--
IF YOU DON'T MIND, MR. DANIELS, I'LL EXPLAIN FROM HERE.
LAKE STEVENS, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. I'M AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIFIED SUPERNATURAL COMBATANT COMMAND.
UM, YOU KNOW THE ACRONYM FOR THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS--
"USUCC." YES. UNFORTUNATE. WE'RE WORKING ON A BETTER ONE. BUT WE'VE GOT MORE PRESSING CONCERNS.
AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE'S A RASH OF EXTRADIMENSIONAL INCURSIONS OCCURRING WORLD-WIDE. CONSERVATIVELY, THREE TIMES AS MANY AS YOU HEAR ABOUT.
PREMAGIC THINKING IS NO LONGER VALID IN OUR WORLD. THE COMMAND STRUCTURE'S BEEN PURGED OF THE KIND OF PEOPLE WHO ATTACKED YOU WHEN YOU WERE TRAINING SLAYERS.
WE SEE YOU AND YOUR ASSOCIATES AS ALLIES.
WE'VE BEEN WORKING WITH YOUR FRIEND KENNEDY. HER COMPANY, DEEPSCAN, IS A MILITARY CONTRACTOR NOW.
WE INITIALLY ASKED HER TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT THIS, BUT SHE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE... AWKWARD, BECAUSE OF YOUR PAST RELATIONSHIP.
SHE CAN BE SO CONDESCENDING. AND ALSO RIGHT.
WE'RE ALSO COORDINATING WITH THE MAGIC COUNCIL.
"MAGIC COUNCIL"? AS IN--
AS IN ME.

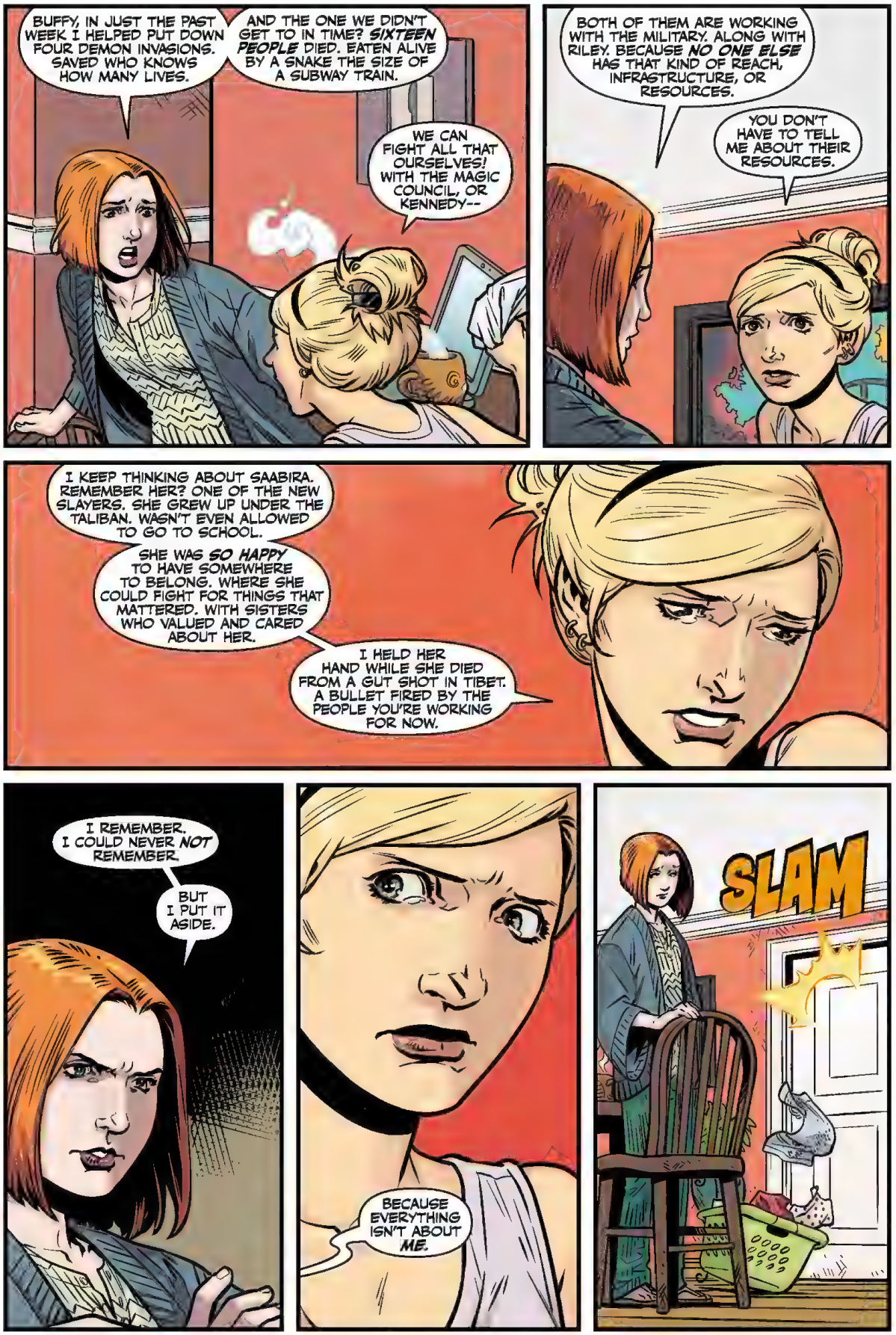
D'HOFFRYN?
HELLO, MISS ROSENBERG. CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW POSITION. I THINK YOU'LL ENJOY IT HERE.
THE CHEF IS WONDERFUL. I TRY TO COORDINATE MY VISITS WITH TACO THURSDAYS.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'VE MET THE FULL COUNCIL YET. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.
WHOA, NELLY. I HAVEN'T SAID I WILL. I'M DEFINITELY NOT COMMITTING WITHOUT TALKING TO BUFFY FIRST.
I UNDERSTAND. WE HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE WHO'LL BE APPROACHING HER IN A MATTER OF DAYS. ALL WE ASK IS THAT YOU KEEP THIS BETWEEN US UNTIL THEN.
WILLOW...OUR WORLD IS IN CRISIS. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HELP. TO SAVE COUNTLESS LIVES. YOU WANT TO DO WORK THAT MATTERS? YOU'LL NEVER HAVE A BETTER CHANCE.
GIVE US A WEEK. THAT'S ALL WE ASK.

NOW.
DYLAN...IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE WE SAW EACH OTHER. THINGS ARE A BIT DIFFERENT. THERE'S SOMETHING I OUGHT TO TELL YOU STRAIGHTAWAY.
I'M IN A RELATIONSHIP.
HA. UM. WOW.
I'M SORRY. BUT...YOU REALLY THINK I'M SO NEEDY AND SAD I'D UPROOT MY LIFE JUST TO CHASE A GUY I KNEW FOR, LIKE, *TWO DAYS*?
OH MY GOD, YOU *DID!*
HANG ON, I DID *NOT.* I JUST... WANTED TO LAY ALL THE CARDS ON THE TABLE, LIKE. I MEAN, IT'S NOT AS IF THERE WASN'T CHEMISTRY BETWEEN US BACK IN THE DAY.
NO, THAT'S TRUE. BUT I...I'M NOW REALLY WONDERING WHAT KIND OF WOMEN YOU USUALLY GET INVOLVED WITH.
VIOLENT ONES. YOU'D BE A DEPARTURE.
OH, HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? YOU TOOK OFF BEFORE I HAD THE CHANCE TO BREAK OUT MY BRASS KNUCKLES.
WELL, THEN... NOT THAT IT AIN'T GOOD TO SEE YOU, BUT...
...WHY *DID* YOU COME LOOKING FOR ME, AFTER ALL THIS TIME?


ACTUALLY, I'M NOT BEING HONEST. THERE *WAS* A PART OF ME THAT THOUGHT ABOUT GOING TO FIND YOU, AFTER I REALIZED WHAT... WHO YOU ARE.
WHEN THAT *HARMONY* GIRL WENT ON T.V., AND VAMPIRES BECAME THE NEW BLACK. SHOWED US THERE'S ALL DIFFERENT KINDS OF YOU GUYS, JUST LIKE PEOPLE.
LISTEN, LOVE, ONE THING HARMONY IS *NOT* IS "JUST LIKE PEOPLE."
ONCE I REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU'D DONE...I MEAN, YOU WERE JUST PASSING THROUGH, BUT YOU SAVED ME FROM THOSE JERKS, AND THOSE KIDS FROM THAT MONSTER...
AND I WENT AND FREAKED OUT WHEN YOU...DID THAT THING WITH YOUR FACE. WHICH I REALIZED WAS JUST *IGNORANCE.* SO I WANTED TO FIND YOU AND APOLOGIZE. AND I DO.
BUT I WAS READY TO DROP *EVERYTHING* AND RUN AFTER A GUY I BARELY KNEW.
OF COURSE, I FIGURED OUT WHAT I WAS DOING PRETTY QUICK. USING YOU TO EXTERNALIZE MY DISSATISFACTION WITH WHERE I LIVED, WHAT I DID...MY *WHOLE LIFE.*
I MEAN, GROWN ADULTS DON'T PUT SOMEONE ON A PEDESTAL, MAKE THEM SOME KIND OF ROMANTIC IDEAL, AND DECIDE THEY'RE THE KEY TO HAPPINESS IN LIFE.
COURSE NOT. THAT'D BE DAFT.
RIGHT? AND ONCE IT HIT ME I WAS ACTUALLY CONSIDERING RUNNING OFF TO CHASE SOME STORYBOOK NOTION OF A PRINCE CHARMING, IT WASN'T A BIG LEAP TO THE TRUTH.
I *WANTED* TO LEAVE. TAKE A CHANCE. REALLY PURSUE MY DREAM--MAKING A CAREER OUT OF MY ART--DAMN THE CONSEQUENCES.
BUT I WAS AFRAID. AND DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOOD ENOUGH, OR IMPORTANT ENOUGH, TO DO IT ON MY OWN.
YOU HELPED ME REALIZE I WAS.

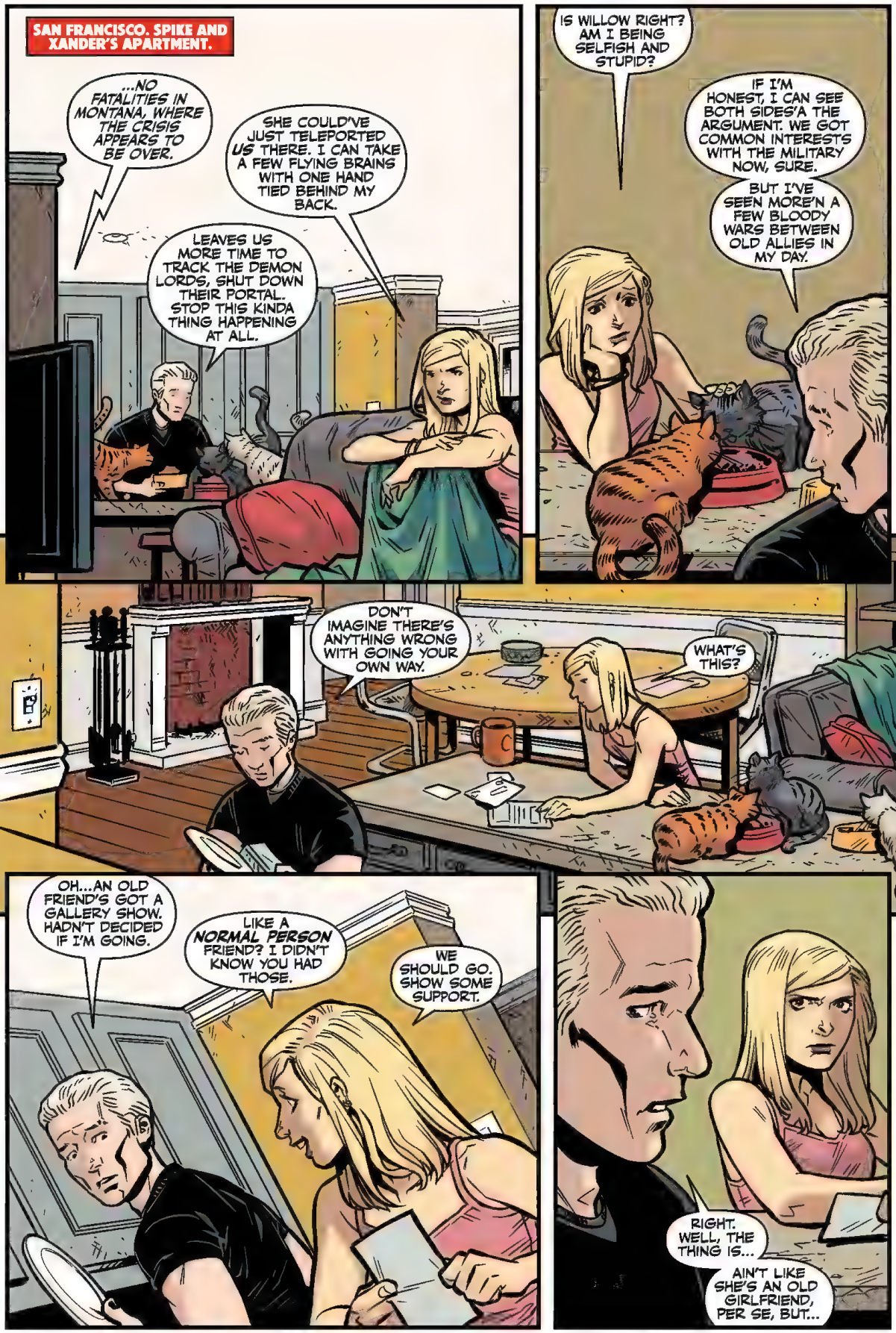
IT ALL CAME TO A HEAD WHEN I SAW YOU ON T.V., FIGHTING THAT GIANT BAT MONSTER TEARING UP SAN FRANCISCO.
YOU WERE SO...REAL. SO GENUINE. YOU WENT OUT AND DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO. NO DOUBT, NO QUESTIONING.
YEAH, THAT'S ME ALL OVER. GENUINE AND FREE OF DOUBT.
SO I DID IT. IT WAS SCARY, AT FIRST. I BLEW THROUGH MY SAVINGS FASTER THAN I THOUGHT POSSIBLE.
BUT THEN I FOUND THIS ADORABLE LITTLE TOWN...ABOUT AN HOUR OUT OF THE CITY. AN ARTS COMMUNITY. OLD HIPPIE ENCLAVE.
I SOLD SOME PAINTINGS. STARTED MAKING A LIVING AT IT. NOT EXACTLY LAVISH, BUT IT PAYS THE RENT.
AND I'VE GOT MY FIRST GALLERY SHOW NEXT WEEK, NOT FAR FROM HERE.
DYLAN TURNER at
THAT'S...DYLAN, THAT'S BLOODY AMAZING, WHAT YOU'VE DONE.
WELL, MAYBE NOT IN THE LARGER SCHEME OF THINGS. BUT FOR MY LIFE, YEAH.
SO I JUST HAD TO FIND YOU AND SAY, THANK YOU, WILLIAM.
I FINALLY GREW UP. AND YOU PLAYED A BIG PART IN THAT.

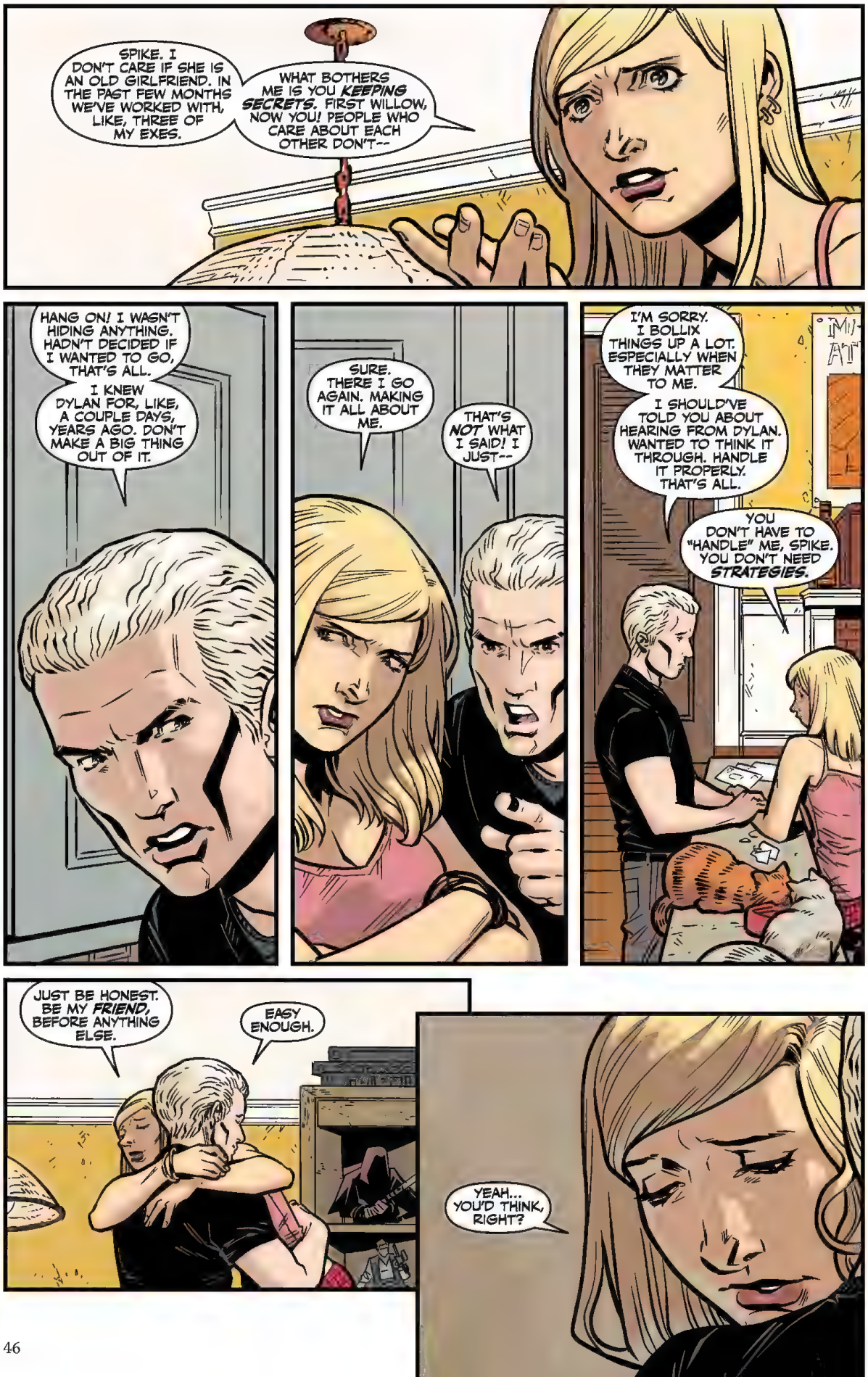

BUFFY AND WILLOW'S APARTMENT. THE NEXT MORNING.
YOU'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THEM A WEEK? YOU'VE KNOWN ALL THAT TIME THEY WERE GONNA COME FOR ME, AND YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING?
THEY ASKED ME NOT TO. NATIONAL SECURITY AND ALL THAT. I TOLD THEM I'D ONLY STAY QUIET FOR A WEEK.
WILLOW, THEY TRIED TO KILL US! THEY KILLED OUR FRIENDS! AND YOU WENT WITH THEM BEHIND MY BACK!
IT...DIDN'T FEEL GOOD. BUT, BUFFY, YOU BOUGHT INTO THEIR ARGUMENT TOO. YOU DID WHAT SATSU ASKED!
I WENT ON ONE MISSION. I MIGHT GO ON OTHERS. I DIDN'T SIGN ON TO THEIR PAYROLL.
I'M ON THEO DANIELS'S PAYROLL. A GUY YOU INTRODUCED ME TO.
I THOUGHT HE WAS INTO SOCIAL NETWORKS! MOBILE GAMES ABOUT CANDY UNICORN FARMS!
ARE YOU ACTUALLY THINKING ABOUT STAYING?
NOT "THINKING." I AM.

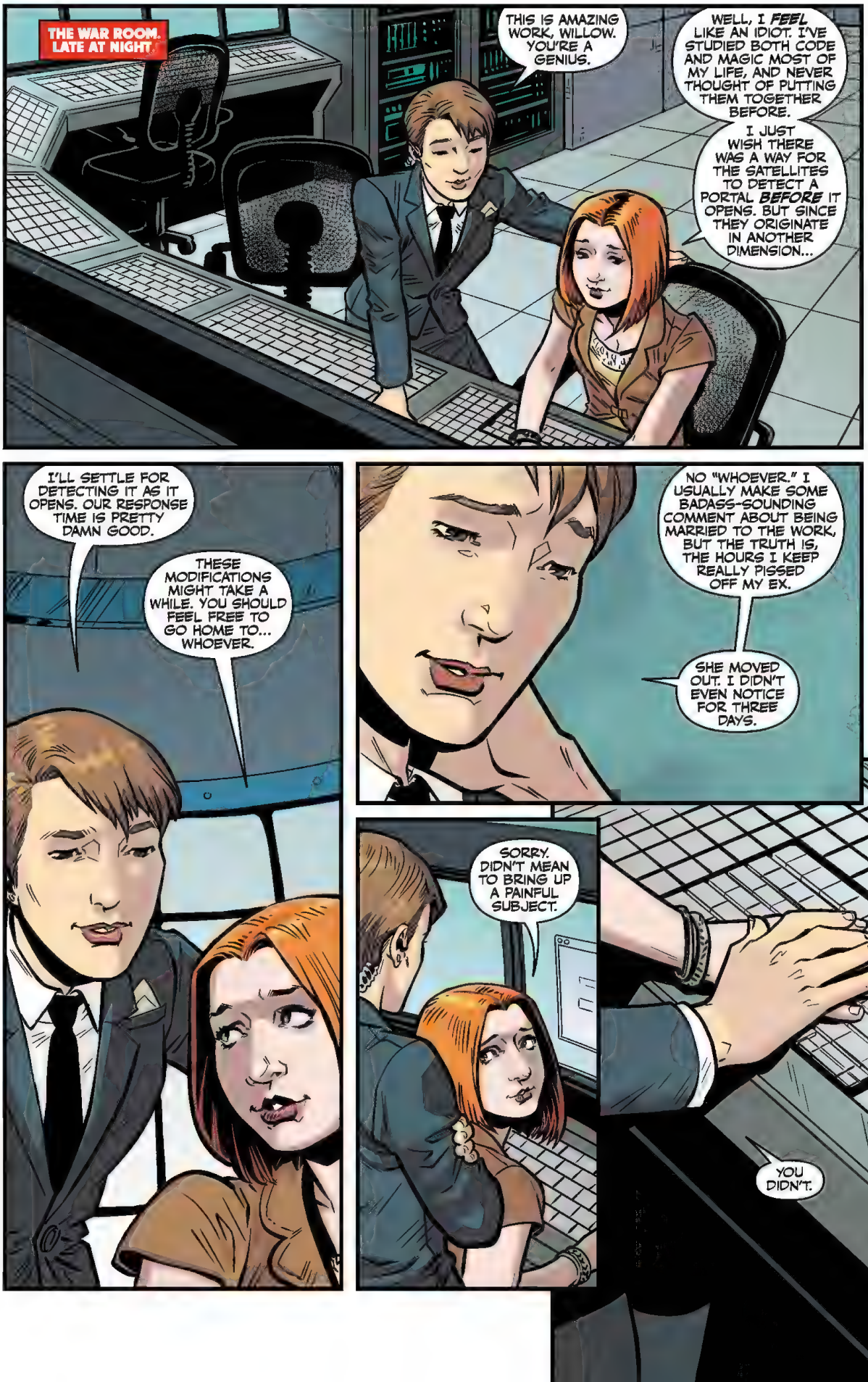

BUFFY, IN JUST THE PAST WEEK I HELPED PUT DOWN FOUR DEMON INVASIONS. SAVED WHO KNOWS HOW MANY LIVES.
AND THE ONE WE DIDN'T GET TO IN TIME? SIXTEEN PEOPLE DIED. EATEN ALIVE BY A SNAKE THE SIZE OF A SUBWAY TRAIN.
WE CAN FIGHT ALL THAT OURSELVES! WITH THE MAGIC COUNCIL, OR KENNEDY--
BOTH OF THEM ARE WORKING WITH THE MILITARY. ALONG WITH RILEY. BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE HAS THAT KIND OF REACH, INFRASTRUCTURE, OR RESOURCES.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME ABOUT THEIR RESOURCES.
I KEEP THINKING ABOUT SAABIRA. REMEMBER HER? ONE OF THE NEW SLAYERS. SHE GREW UP UNDER THE TALIBAN. WASN'T EVEN ALLOWED TO GO TO SCHOOL.
SHE WAS SO HAPPY TO HAVE SOMEWHERE TO BELONG. WHERE SHE COULD FIGHT FOR THINGS THAT MATTERED. WITH SISTERS WHO VALUED AND CARED ABOUT HER.
I HELD HER HAND WHILE SHE DIED FROM A GUT SHOT IN TIBET. A BULLET FIRED BY THE PEOPLE YOU'RE WORKING FOR NOW.
I REMEMBER. I COULD NEVER NOT REMEMBER.
BUT I PUT IT ASIDE.
BECAUSE EVERYTHING ISN'T ABOUT ME.
SLAM

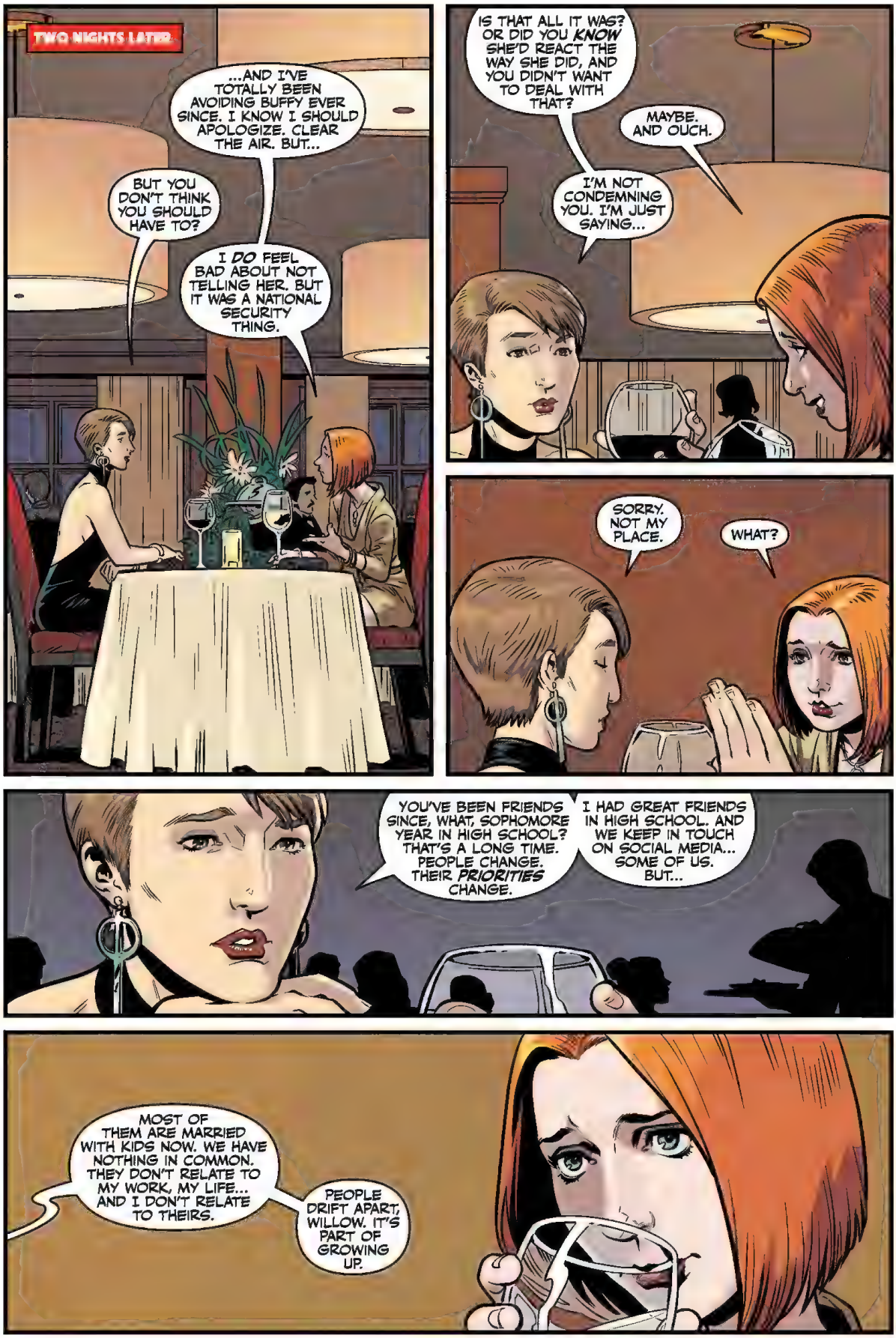
MONTANA.
BULLETS DON'T TOUCH 'EM! THEY'VE GOT SOME KIND OF FORCE FIELD!
DAMN IT. ALL RIGHT, AIM AT THE CIVILIANS. SHOOT TO WOUND IF YOU CAN, BUT SHOOT TO KILL IF YOU HAVE TO. FOR ALL WE KNOW, THOSE PEOPLE ARE ALREADY DEAD.
THEY'RE NOT. HOLD YOUR FIRE.
NO ONE DIES HERE TODAY.
KRZZAT

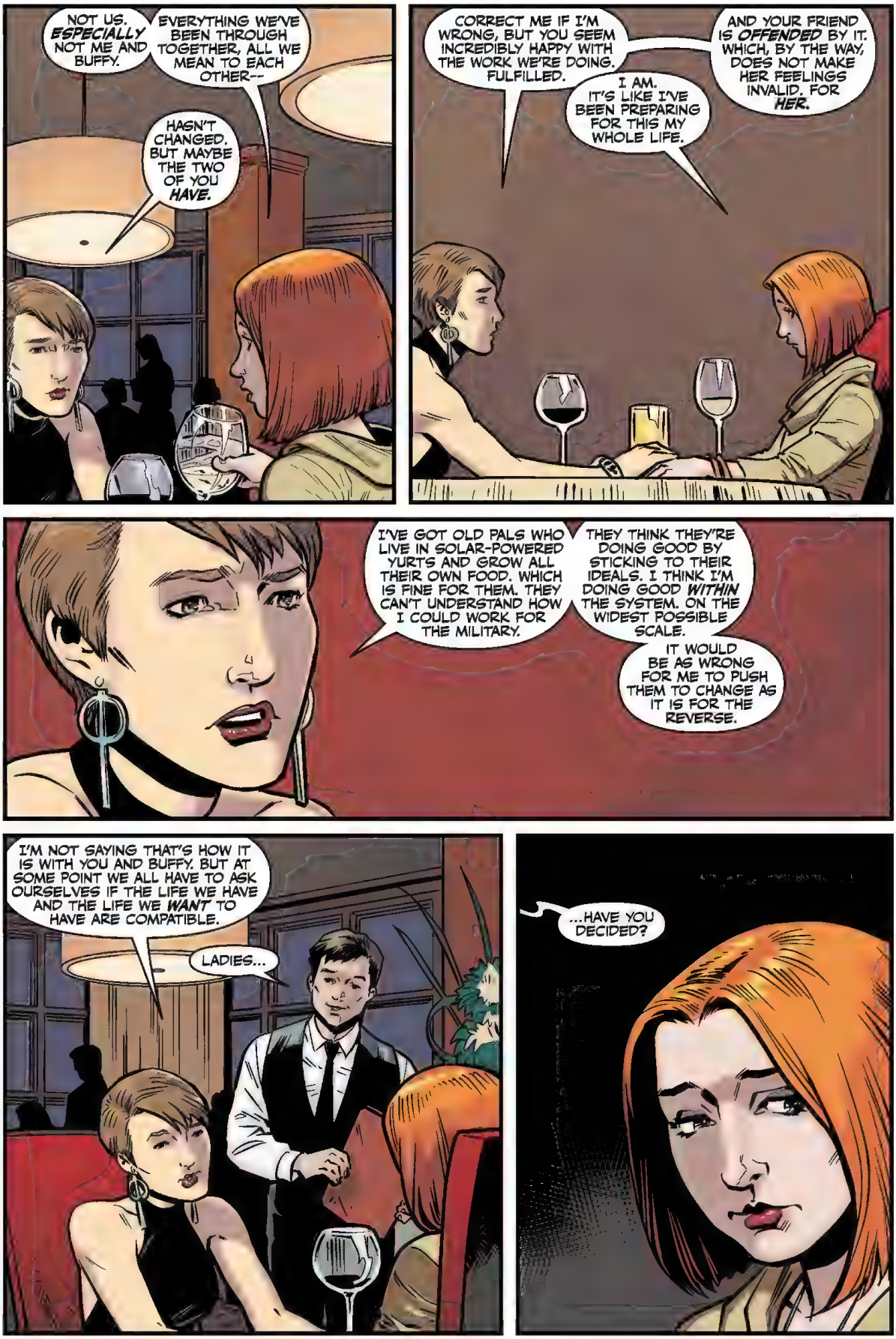
NOW! WHILE THEY'RE USING ALL THEIR POWER TO ATTACK ME!
OPEN FIRE ON THE FLYING BRAINS!
BRATTATTATTATTAT
WE GOT 'EM! MAN, THAT WAS AWESOME!
HELL OF A JOB, MA'AM. WE'RE NATIONAL GUARD...THOSE ARE OUR FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, SOME OF 'EM FAMILY WE WERE ABOUT TO SHOOT.
YOU SAVED A LOT MORE THAN THEIR LIVES HERE TODAY.

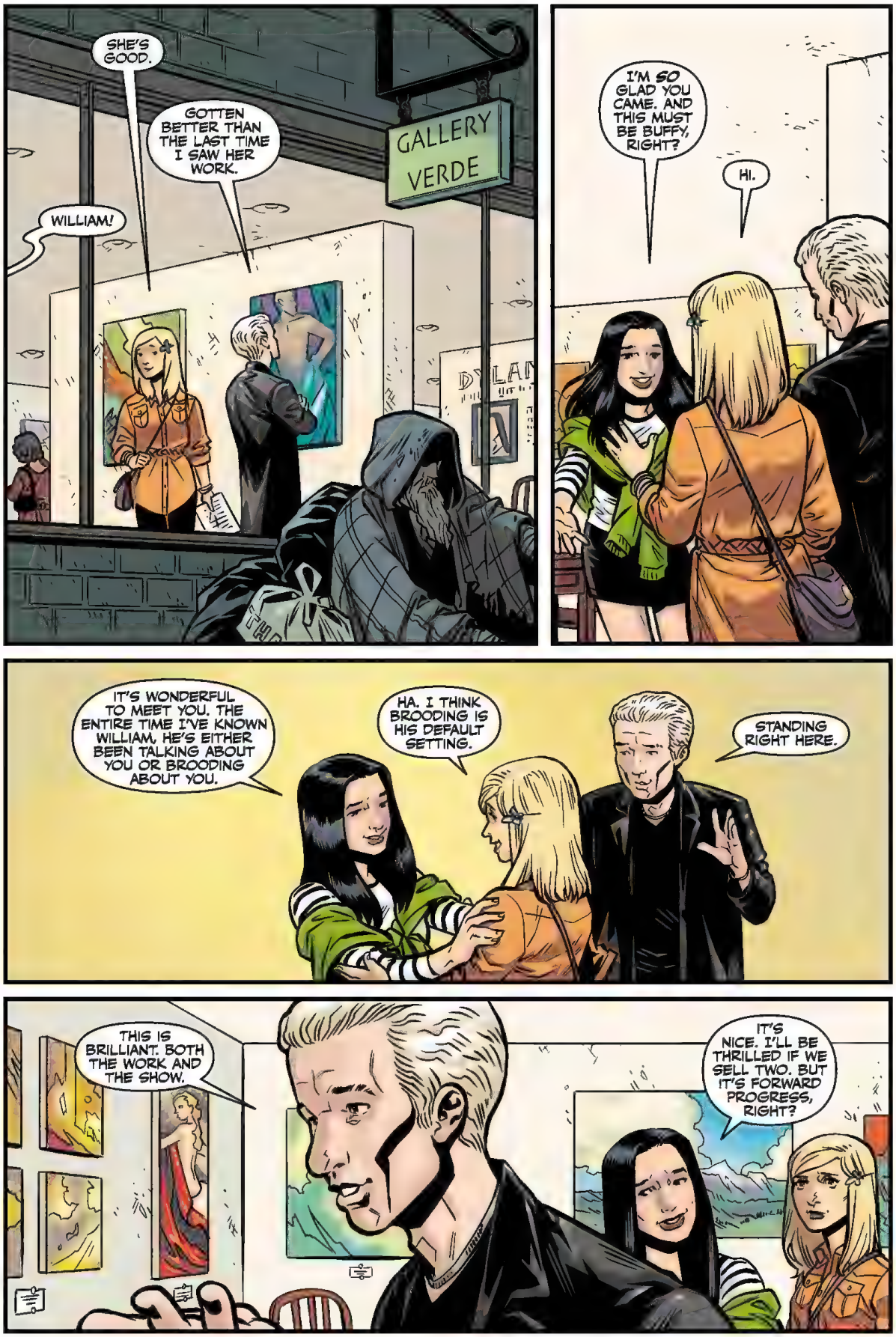

SAN FRANCISCO. SPIKE AND XANDER'S APARTMENT.
...NO FATALITIES IN MONTANA, WHERE THE CRISIS APPEARS TO BE OVER.
SHE COULD'VE JUST TELEPORTED US THERE. I CAN TAKE A FEW FLYING BRAINS WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND MY BACK.
LEAVES US MORE TIME TO TRACK THE DEMON LORDS, SHUT DOWN THEIR PORTAL. STOP THIS KINDA THING HAPPENING AT ALL.
IS WILLOW RIGHT? AM I BEING SELFISH AND STUPID?
IF I'M HONEST, I CAN SEE BOTH SIDES'A THE ARGUMENT. WE GOT COMMON INTERESTS WITH THE MILITARY NOW, SURE.
BUT I'VE SEEN MORE'N A FEW BLOODY WARS BETWEEN OLD ALLIES IN MY DAY.
DON'T IMAGINE THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH GOING YOUR OWN WAY.
WHAT'S THIS?
OH...AN OLD FRIEND'S GOT A GALLERY SHOW. HADN'T DECIDED IF I'M GOING.
LIKE A NORMAL PERSON FRIEND? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD THOSE.
WE SHOULD GO. SHOW SOME SUPPORT.
RIGHT. WELL, THE THING IS...
AIN'T LIKE SHE'S AN OLD GIRLFRIEND, PER SE, BUT...

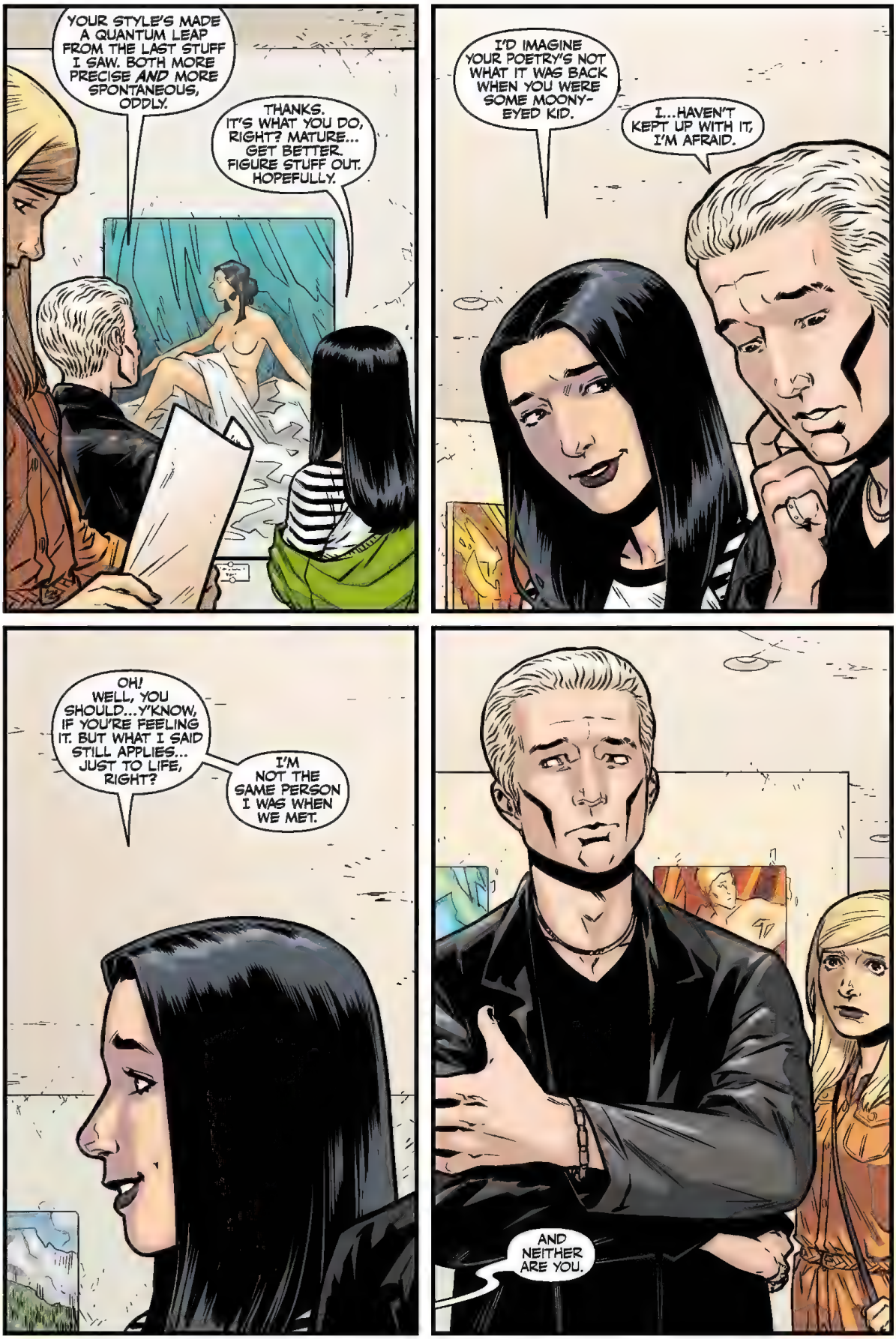

SPIKE. I DON'T CARE IF SHE IS AN OLD GIRLFRIEND. IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS WE'VE WORKED WITH, LIKE, THREE OF MY EXES.
WHAT BOTHERS ME IS YOU KEEPING SECRETS. FIRST WILLOW, NOW YOU! PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER DON'T--
HANG ON! I WASN'T HIDING ANYTHING. HADN'T DECIDED IF I WANTED TO GO, THAT'S ALL.
I KNEW DYLAN FOR, LIKE, A COUPLE DAYS, YEARS AGO. DON'T MAKE A BIG THING OUT OF IT.
SURE. THERE I GO AGAIN. MAKING IT ALL ABOUT ME.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID! I JUST--
I'M SORRY. I BOLLIX THINGS UP A LOT. ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY MATTER TO ME.
I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT HEARING FROM DYLAN. WANTED TO THINK IT THROUGH. HANDLE IT PROPERLY. THAT'S ALL.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO "HANDLE" ME, SPIKE. YOU DON'T NEED STRATEGIES.
JUST BE HONEST. BE MY FRIEND, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE.
EASY ENOUGH.
YEAH... YOU'D THINK, RIGHT?

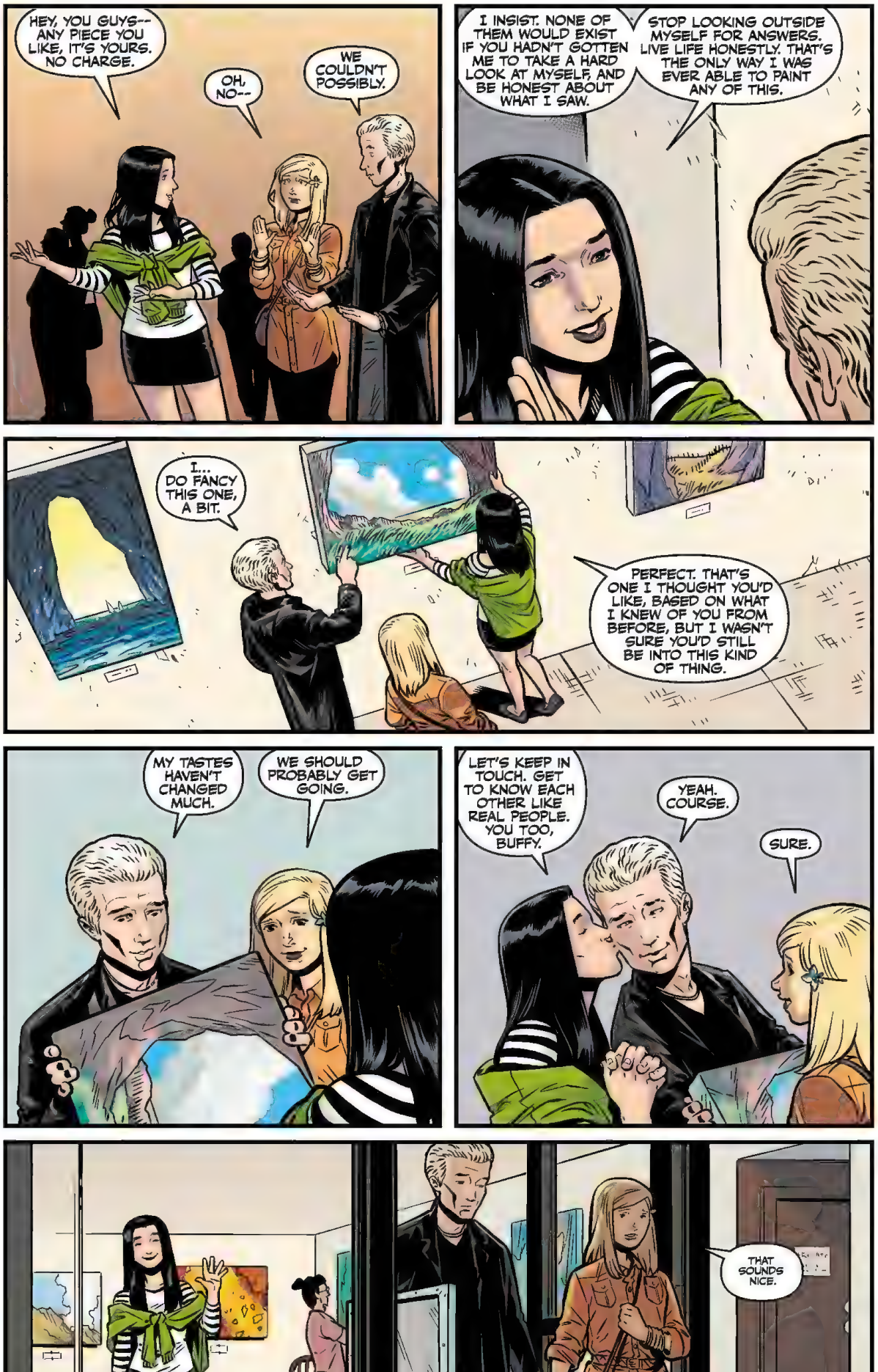

THE WAR ROOM. LATE AT NIGHT.
THIS IS AMAZING WORK, WILLOW. YOU'RE A GENIUS.
WELL, I FEEL LIKE AN IDIOT. I'VE STUDIED BOTH CODE AND MAGIC MOST OF MY LIFE, AND NEVER THOUGHT OF PUTTING THEM TOGETHER BEFORE.
I JUST WISH THERE WAS A WAY FOR THE SATELLITES TO DETECT A PORTAL BEFORE IT OPENS. BUT SINCE THEY ORIGINATE IN ANOTHER DIMENSION...
I'LL SETTLE FOR DETECTING IT AS IT OPENS. OUR RESPONSE TIME IS PRETTY DAMN GOOD.
THESE MODIFICATIONS MIGHT TAKE A WHILE. YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO GO HOME TO... WHOEVER.
NO "WHOEVER." I USUALLY MAKE SOME BADASS-SOUNDING COMMENT ABOUT BEING MARRIED TO THE WORK, BUT THE TRUTH IS, THE HOURS I KEEP REALLY PISSED OFF MY EX.
SHE MOVED OUT. I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE FOR THREE DAYS.
SORRY. DIDN'T MEAN TO BRING UP A PAINFUL SUBJECT.
YOU DIDN'T.

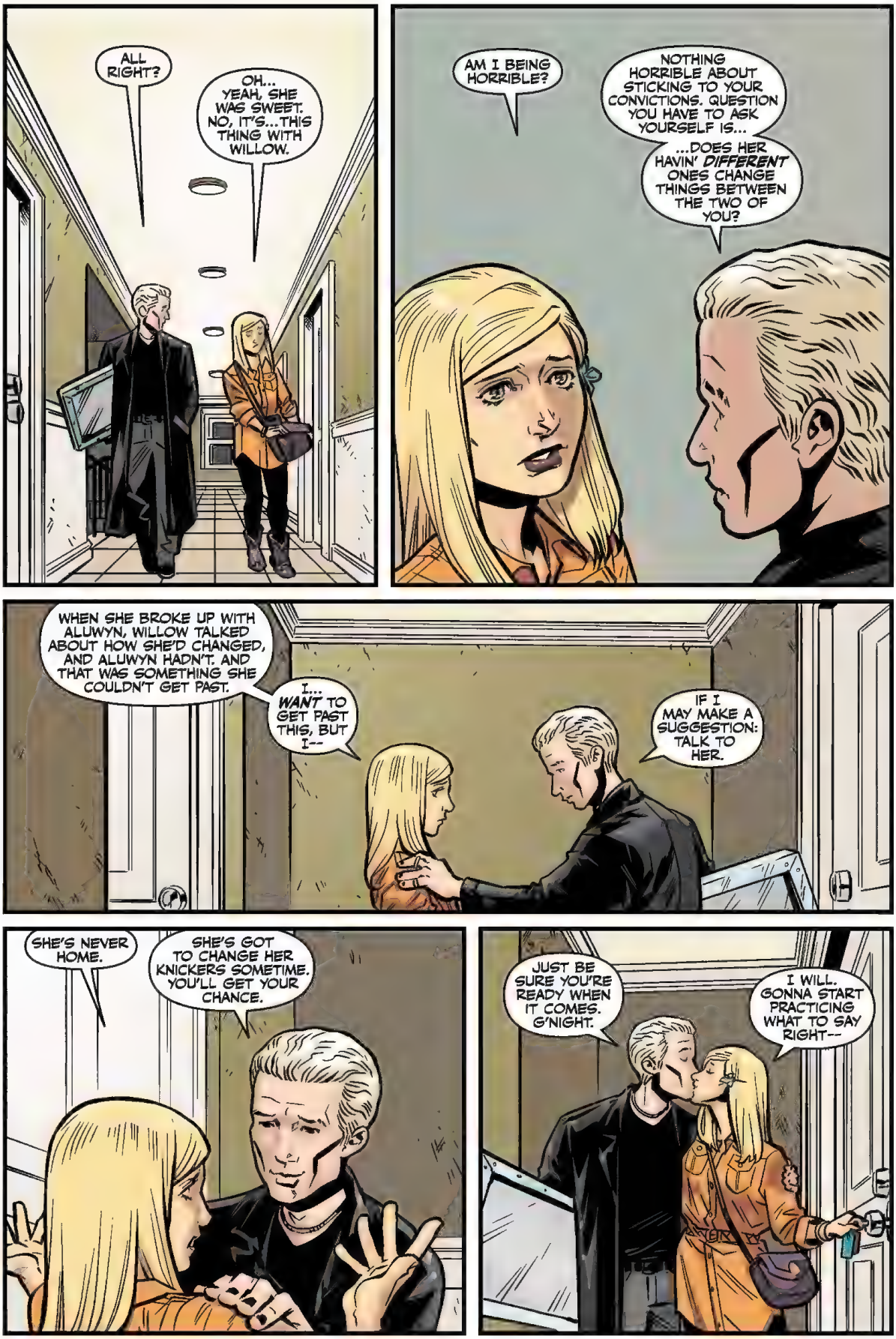

TWO NIGHTS LATER
...AND I'VE TOTALLY BEEN AVOIDING BUFFY EVER SINCE. I KNOW I SHOULD APOLOGIZE. CLEAR THE AIR. BUT...
BUT YOU DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE TO?
I DO FEEL BAD ABOUT NOT TELLING HER. BUT IT WAS A NATIONAL SECURITY THING.
IS THAT ALL IT WAS? OR DID YOU KNOW SHE'D REACT THE WAY SHE DID, AND YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DEAL WITH THAT?
MAYBE. AND OUCH.
I'M NOT CONDEMNING YOU. I'M JUST SAYING...
SORRY. NOT MY PLACE.
WHAT?
YOU'VE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE, WHAT, SOPHOMORE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL? THAT'S A LONG TIME. PEOPLE CHANGE. THEIR PRIORITIES CHANGE.
I HAD GREAT FRIENDS IN HIGH SCHOOL. AND WE KEEP IN TOUCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA... SOME OF US. BUT...
MOST OF THEM ARE MARRIED WITH KIDS NOW. WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON. THEY DON'T RELATE TO MY WORK, MY LIFE... AND I DON'T RELATE TO THEIRS.
PEOPLE DRIFT APART, WILLOW. IT'S PART OF GROWING UP.

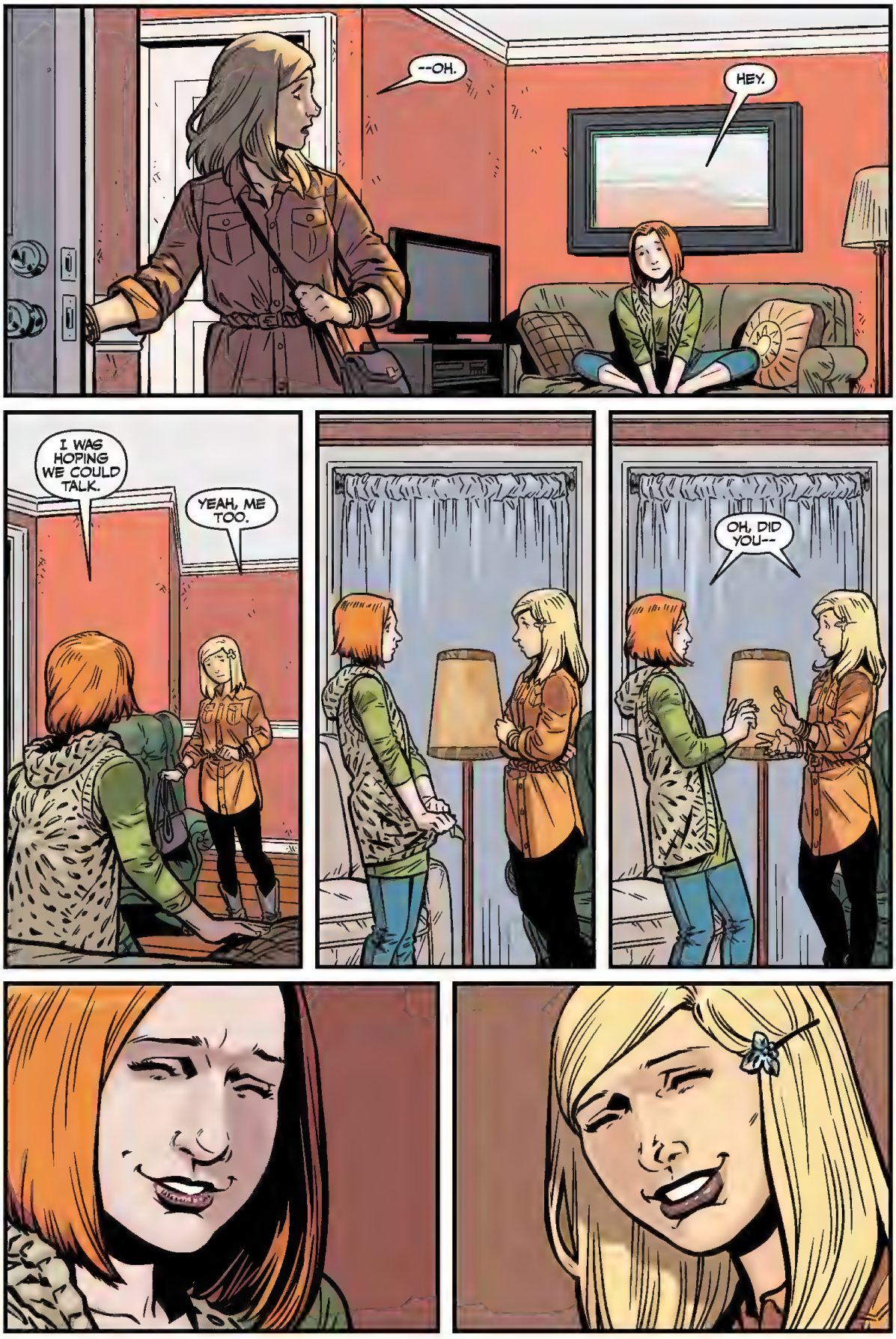

NOT US. ESPECIALLY NOT ME AND BUFFY.
EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER, ALL WE MEAN TO EACH OTHER--
HASN'T CHANGED. BUT MAYBE THE TWO OF YOU HAVE.
CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG, BUT YOU SEEM INCREDIBLY HAPPY WITH THE WORK WE'RE DOING. FULFILLED.
I AM. IT'S LIKE I'VE BEEN PREPARING FOR THIS MY WHOLE LIFE.
AND YOUR FRIEND IS OFFENDED BY IT. WHICH, BY THE WAY, DOES NOT MAKE HER FEELINGS INVALID. FOR HER.
I'VE GOT OLD PALS WHO LIVE IN SOLAR-POWERED YURTS AND GROW ALL THEIR OWN FOOD. WHICH IS FINE FOR THEM. THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW I COULD WORK FOR THE MILITARY.
THEY THINK THEY'RE DOING GOOD BY STICKING TO THEIR IDEALS. I THINK I'M DOING GOOD WITHIN THE SYSTEM. ON THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SCALE.
IT WOULD BE AS WRONG FOR ME TO PUSH THEM TO CHANGE AS IT IS FOR THE REVERSE.
I'M NOT SAYING THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH YOU AND BUFFY. BUT AT SOME POINT WE ALL HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES IF THE LIFE WE HAVE AND THE LIFE WE WANT TO HAVE ARE COMPATIBLE.
LADIES...
...HAVE YOU DECIDED?

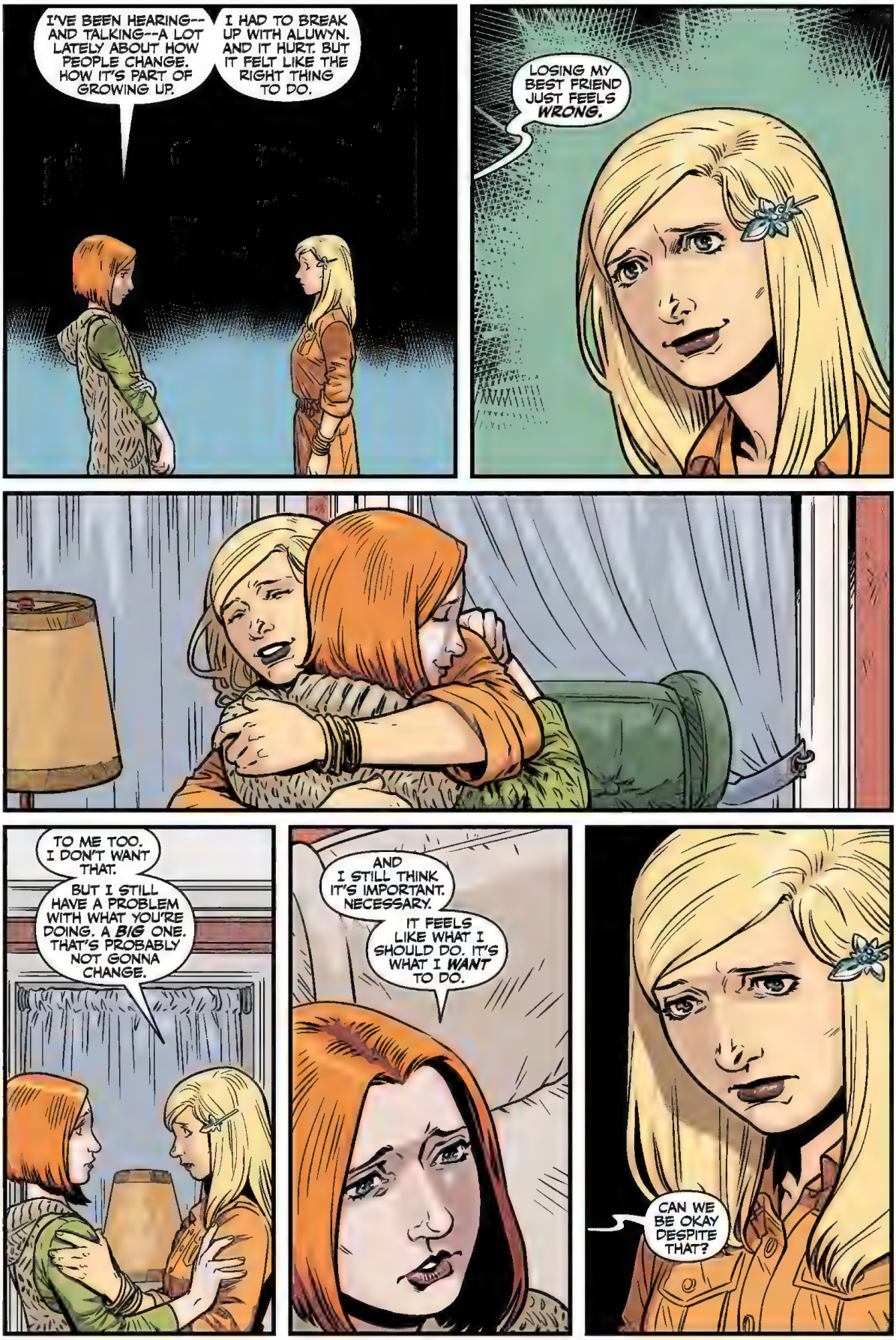

SHE'S GOOD.
GOTTEN BETTER THAN THE LAST TIME I SAW HER WORK.
WILLIAM!
GALLERY VERDE
I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME. AND THIS MUST BE BUFFY, RIGHT?
HI.
IT'S WONDERFUL TO MEET YOU. THE ENTIRE TIME I'VE KNOWN WILLIAM, HE'S EITHER BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOU OR BROODING ABOUT YOU.
HA. I THINK BROODING IS HIS DEFAULT SETTING.
STANDING RIGHT HERE.
THIS IS BRILLIANT. BOTH THE WORK AND THE SHOW.
IT'S NICE. I'LL BE THRILLED IF WE SELL TWO. BUT IT'S FORWARD PROGRESS, RIGHT?

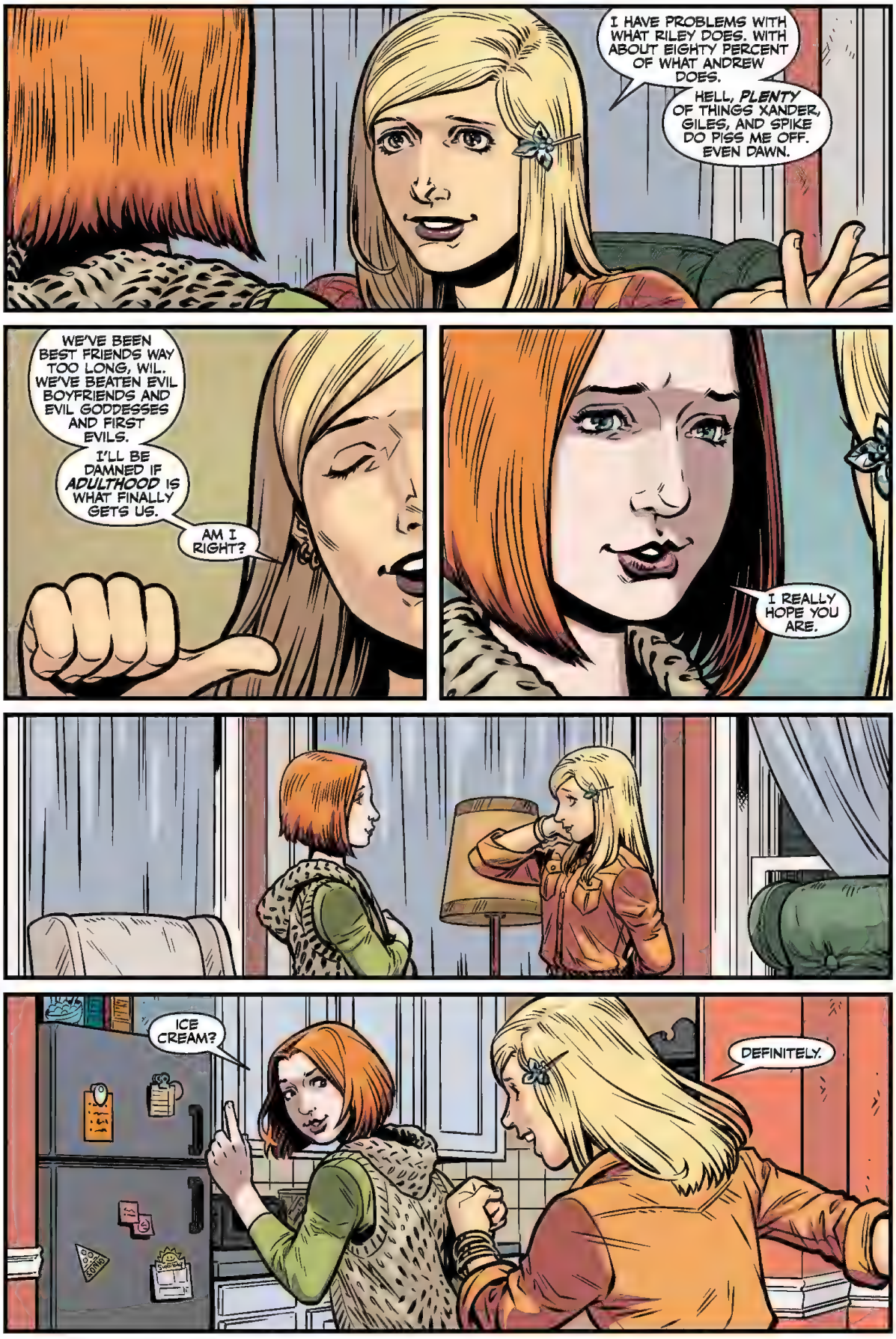

YOUR STYLE'S MADE A QUANTUM LEAP FROM THE LAST STUFF I SAW. BOTH MORE PRECISE AND MORE SPONTANEOUS, ODDLY.
THANKS. IT'S WHAT YOU DO, RIGHT? MATURE... GET BETTER. FIGURE STUFF OUT. HOPEFULLY.
I'D IMAGINE YOUR POETRY'S NOT WHAT IT WAS BACK WHEN YOU WERE SOME MOONY-EYED KID.
I...HAVEN'T KEPT UP WITH IT, I'M AFRAID.
OH! WELL, YOU SHOULD...Y'KNOW, IF YOU'RE FEELING IT. BUT WHAT I SAID STILL APPLIES... JUST TO LIFE, RIGHT?
I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I WAS WHEN WE MET.
AND NEITHER ARE YOU.

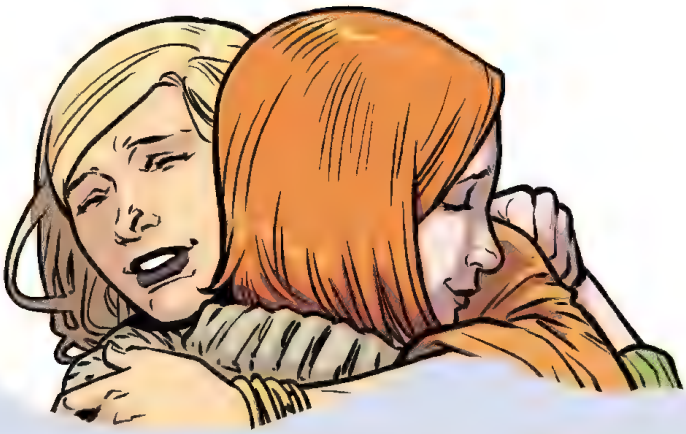

HEY, YOU GUYS-- ANY PIECE YOU LIKE, IT'S YOURS. NO CHARGE.
OH, NO--
WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY.
I INSIST. NONE OF THEM WOULD EXIST IF YOU HADN'T GOTTEN ME TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT MYSELF, AND BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT I SAW.
STOP LOOKING OUTSIDE MYSELF FOR ANSWERS. LIVE LIFE HONESTLY. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I WAS EVER ABLE TO PAINT ANY OF THIS.
I... DO FANCY THIS ONE, A BIT.
PERFECT. THAT'S ONE I THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE, BASED ON WHAT I KNEW OF YOU FROM BEFORE, BUT I WASN'T SURE YOU'D STILL BE INTO THIS KIND OF THING.
MY TASTES HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH.
WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET GOING.
LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER LIKE REAL PEOPLE. YOU TOO, BUFFY.
YEAH. COURSE.
SURE.
THAT SOUNDS NICE.

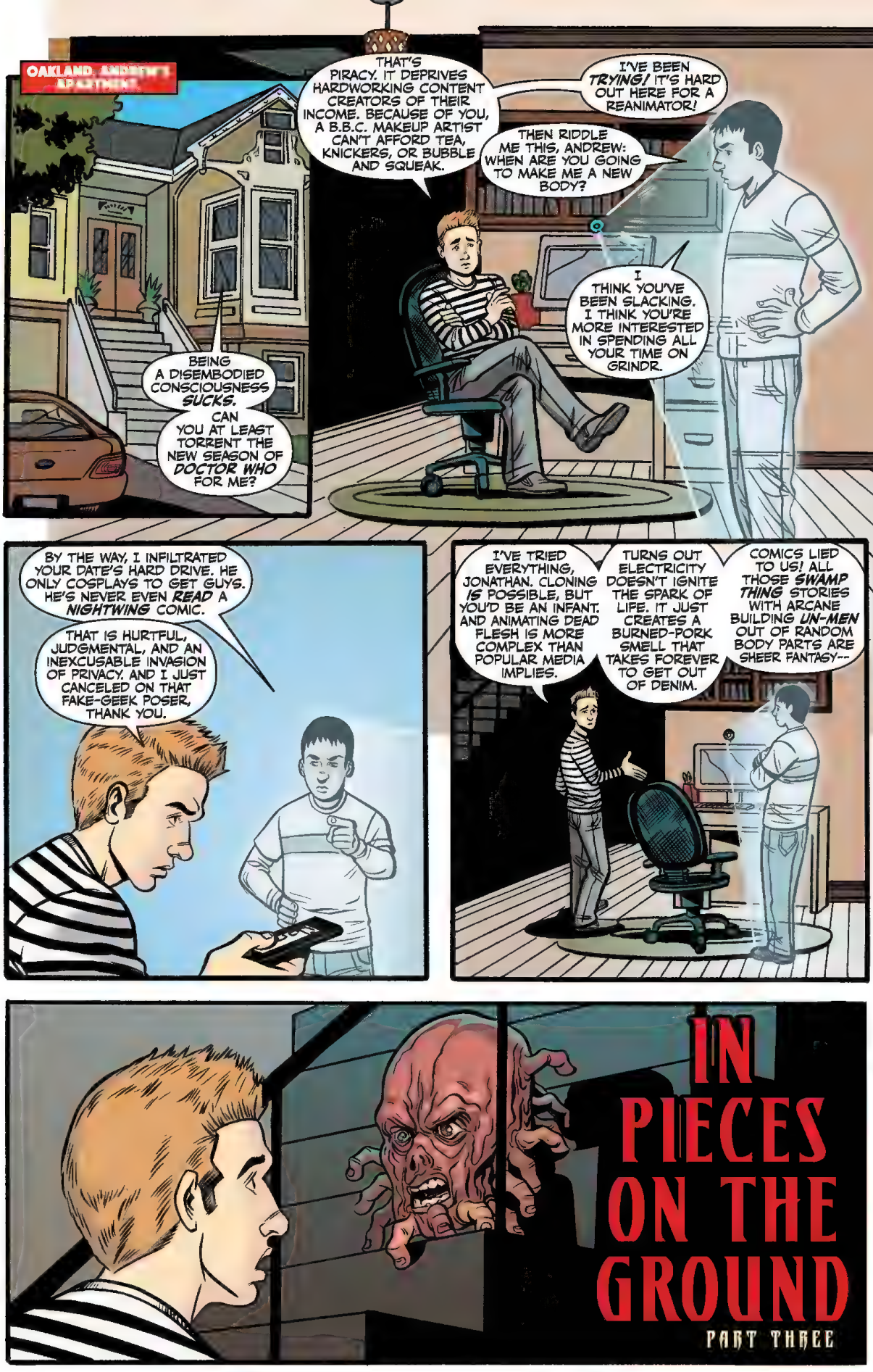

ALL RIGHT?
OH... YEAH, SHE WAS SWEET. NO, IT'S...THIS THING WITH WILLOW.
AM I BEING HORRIBLE?
NOTHING HORRIBLE ABOUT STICKING TO YOUR CONVICTIONS. QUESTION YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF IS...
...DOES HER HAVIN' DIFFERENT ONES CHANGE THINGS BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU?
WHEN SHE BROKE UP WITH ALUWYN, WILLOW TALKED ABOUT HOW SHE'D CHANGED, AND ALUWYN HADN'T. AND THAT WAS SOMETHING SHE COULDN'T GET PAST.
I... WANT TO GET PAST THIS, BUT I--
IF I MAY MAKE A SUGGESTION: TALK TO HER.
SHE'S NEVER HOME.
SHE'S GOT TO CHANGE HER KNICKERS SOMETIME. YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE.
JUST BE SURE YOU'RE READY WHEN IT COMES. G'NIGHT.
I WILL. GONNA START PRACTICING WHAT TO SAY RIGHT--

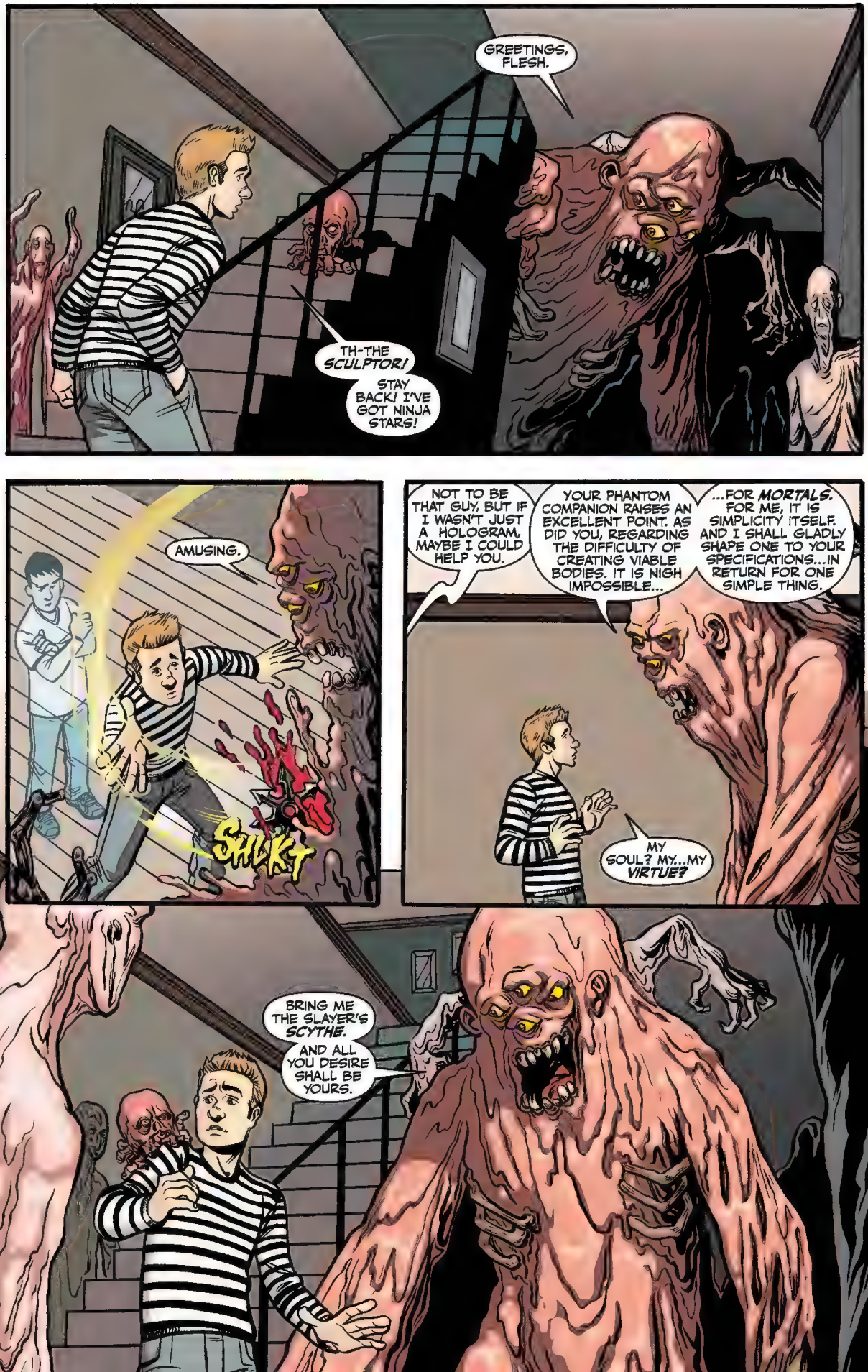

--OH.
HEY.
I WAS HOPING WE COULD TALK.
YEAH, ME TOO.
OH, DID YOU--


I'VE BEEN HEARING--AND TALKING--A LOT LATELY ABOUT HOW PEOPLE CHANGE. HOW IT'S PART OF GROWING UP.
I HAD TO BREAK UP WITH ALUWYN. AND IT HURT. BUT IT FELT LIKE THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
LOSING MY BEST FRIEND JUST FEELS WRONG.
TO ME TOO. I DON'T WANT THAT.
BUT I STILL HAVE A PROBLEM WITH WHAT YOU'RE DOING. A BIG ONE. THAT'S PROBABLY NOT GONNA CHANGE.
AND I STILL THINK IT'S IMPORTANT. NECESSARY.
IT FEELS LIKE WHAT I SHOULD DO. IT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO.
CAN WE BE OKAY DESPITE THAT?


I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH WHAT RILEY DOES. WITH ABOUT EIGHTY PERCENT OF WHAT ANDREW DOES.
HELL, *PLENTY* OF THINGS XANDER, GILES, AND SPIKE DO PISS ME OFF. EVEN DAWN.
WE'VE BEEN BEST FRIENDS WAY TOO LONG, WIL. WE'VE BEATEN EVIL BOYFRIENDS AND EVIL GODDESSES AND FIRST EVILS.
I'LL BE DAMNED IF *ADULTHOOD* IS WHAT FINALLY GETS US.
AM I RIGHT?
I REALLY HOPE YOU ARE.
ICE CREAM?
DEFINITELY.



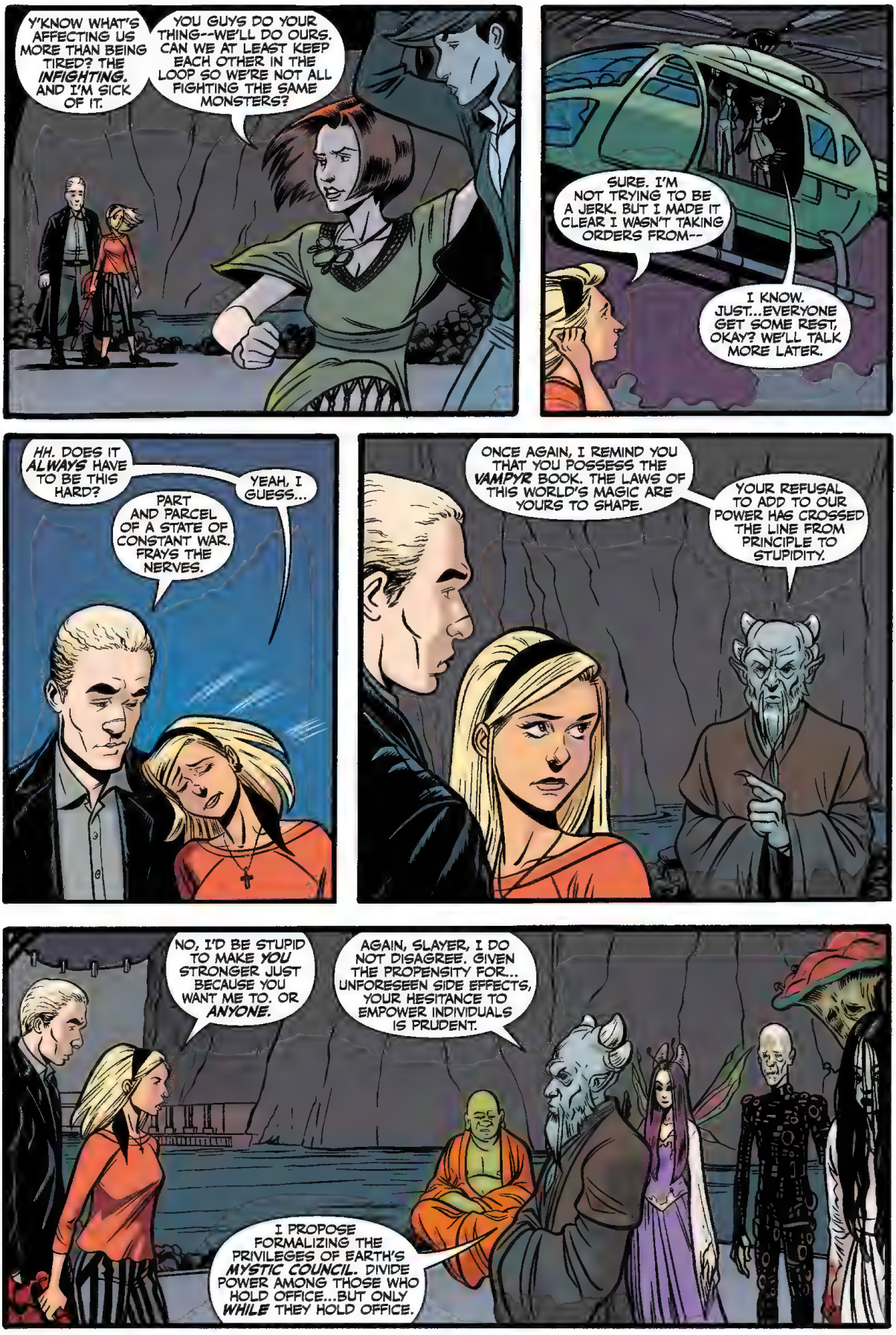

OAKLAND, ANDREW'S APARTMENT
BEING A DISEMBODIED CONSCIOUSNESS *SUCKS*. CAN YOU AT LEAST TORRENT THE NEW SEASON OF *DOCTOR WHO* FOR ME?
THAT'S PIRACY. IT DEPRIVES HARDWORKING CONTENT CREATORS OF THEIR INCOME. BECAUSE OF YOU, A B.B.C. MAKEUP ARTIST CAN'T AFFORD TEA, KNICKERS, OR BUBBLE AND SQUEAK.
I'VE BEEN *TRYING!* IT'S HARD OUT HERE FOR A REANIMATOR!
THEN RIDDLE ME THIS, ANDREW: WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME A NEW BODY?
I THINK YOU'VE BEEN SLACKING. I THINK YOU'RE MORE INTERESTED IN SPENDING ALL YOUR TIME ON GRINDR.
BY THE WAY, I INFILTRATED YOUR DATE'S HARD DRIVE. HE ONLY COSPLAYS TO GET GUYS. HE'S NEVER EVEN *READ* A *NIGHTWING* COMIC.
THAT IS HURTFUL, JUDGMENTAL, AND AN INEXCUSABLE INVASION OF PRIVACY. AND I JUST CANCELED ON THAT FAKE-GEEK POSER, THANK YOU.
I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, JONATHAN. CLONING *IS* POSSIBLE, BUT YOU'D BE AN INFANT. AND ANIMATING DEAD FLESH IS MORE COMPLEX THAN POPULAR MEDIA IMPLIES.
TURNS OUT ELECTRICITY DOESN'T IGNITE THE SPARK OF LIFE. IT JUST CREATES A BURNED-PORK SMELL THAT TAKES FOREVER TO GET OUT OF DENIM.
COMICS LIED TO US! ALL THOSE *SWAMP THING* STORIES WITH ARCANE BUILDING *UN-MEN* OUT OF RANDOM BODY PARTS ARE SHEER FANTASY---
IN PIECES ON THE GROUND
PART THREE

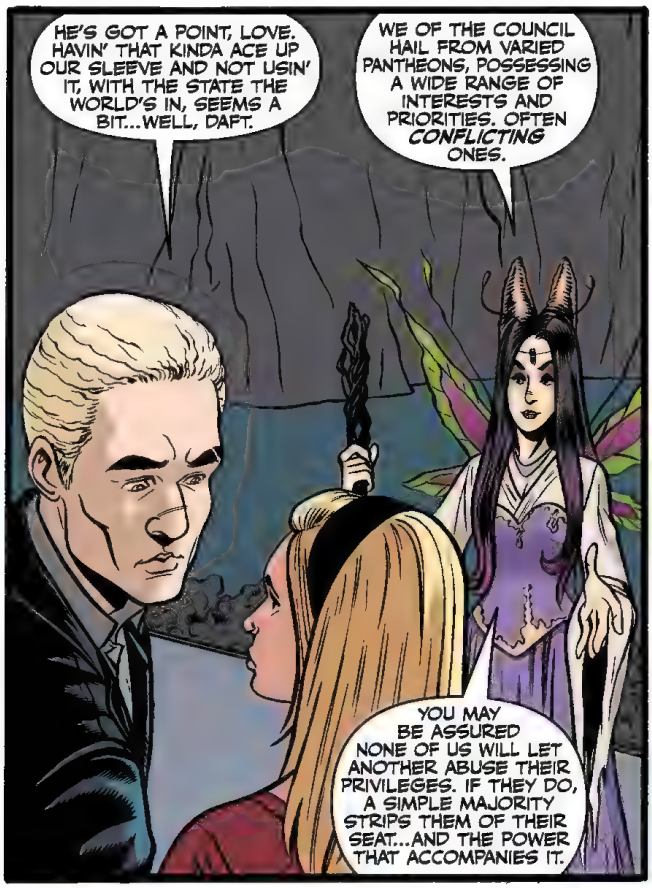

GREETINGS, FLESH.
TH-THE SCULPTOR!
STAY BACK! I'VE GOT NINJA STARS!
AMUSING.
SHUKT
NOT TO BE THAT GUY, BUT IF I WASN'T JUST A HOLOGRAM, MAYBE I COULD HELP YOU.
YOUR PHANTOM COMPANION RAISES AN EXCELLENT POINT. AS DID YOU, REGARDING THE DIFFICULTY OF CREATING VIABLE BODIES. IT IS NIGH IMPOSSIBLE...
...FOR MORTALS. FOR ME, IT IS SIMPLICITY ITSELF. AND I SHALL GLADLY SHAPE ONE TO YOUR SPECIFICATIONS...IN RETURN FOR ONE SIMPLE THING.
MY SOUL? MY...MY VIRTUE?
BRING ME THE SLAYER'S SCYTHE.
AND ALL YOU DESIRE SHALL BE YOURS.

RELEASE THE SMACKIN'!
THE HOOVER DAM. LAS VEGAS, NEVADA.
NICE ONE! FIRST TIME WE'VE MANAGED TO ACTUALLY HURT THE SLIMY BUGGER.
DO NOT SLAY THE KRAKEN! IT SERVES AN IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION IN ITS NATIVE DIMENSION. WE MUST SEND IT BACK!
I'M TRYING, D'HOFFRYN! OPENING PORTALS IS HARD... BECAUSE WE ALL AGREED TO MAKE IT THAT WAY, REMEMBER?
MRRAAAWW

I HAVE EXPENDED MUCH ENERGY BATTLING DEMONIC INCURSIONS OF LATE. I WILL BE UNABLE TO SUSTAIN THIS FOR LONG.
HASN'T... BEEN A PICNIC... FOR ME EITHER. BUT I THINK...
YES! OKAY, PEOPLE, WE'VE FORCED OPEN THE KRAKEN'S PORTAL.
NOW, EVERYONE-- DRIVE IT BACK!
I RECOMMEND LOUD SOUNDS AND BRIGHT COLORS. A DEEP-SEA DWELLER SHOULD FIND THEM ANNOYING.
UH-OH. A LITTLE HELP HERE?!
I DON'T WANNA END UP IN THIS THING'S DIMENSION! IT SMELLS LIKE AIRPLANE BATHROOMS!

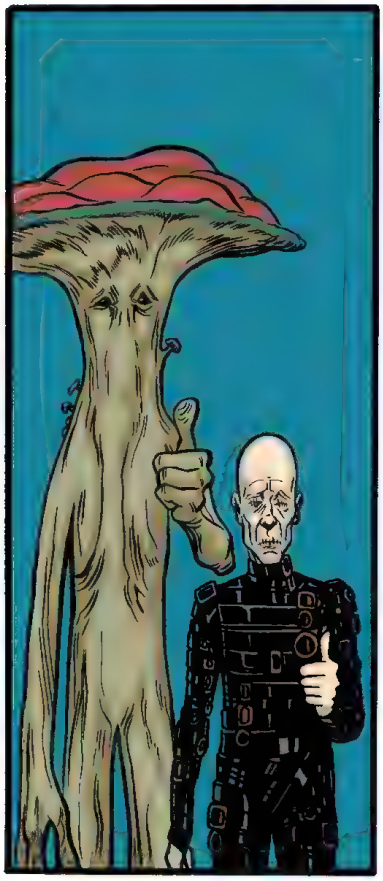
DO NOT TEAR MY WEDDING DRESS, OR I WILL HAVE YOUR SOUL FOR MY DOWRY CHEST.
GOTCHA. CHEERS, KEIKO.
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? YOU ALMOST BOUNCED ME INTO KRAKENWORLD!
YOUR SCYTHE SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY EFFECTIVE WEAPON AGAINST THE BEAST. HAD YOU BEEN LOST, YOUR SACRIFICE WOULD HAVE BEEN HONORED.
I'LL HONOR MY SCYTHE UPSIDE YOUR HIPSTER-BEARDED FACE, PAL--
GUYS. EASY. I THINK WE ALL AGREE THAT COULD'VE BEEN HANDLED BETTER.
BUT WE'RE FIGHTING THESE INVASIONS 24/7. WE'RE ALL *EXHAUSTED*. IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE IF WE'RE NOT AT OUR BEST.
THERE'S TIRED, AND THEN THERE'S CARELESS. *SLOPPY*.
BUFFY'S GOT A POINT. WE SHOULD DIVIDE YOU INTO TEAMS... DEPLOY YOU IN SHIFTS.
YOU DON'T DEPLOY *ME* ANYWHERE, LADY. I'M A CIVILIAN. I GO WHERE I WANT.
EASY, LOVE. LAKE'S JUST TRYIN' TO HELP. A LITTLE FRIENDLY ADVICE FROM MILITARY INTELLIGENCE IS ALWAYS APPRECIATED, INNIT?
WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?
THE SIDE THAT LIKES TO KEEP HELL IN HELL DIMENSIONS. THE SIDE I THOUGHT WE WERE *ALL* ON.

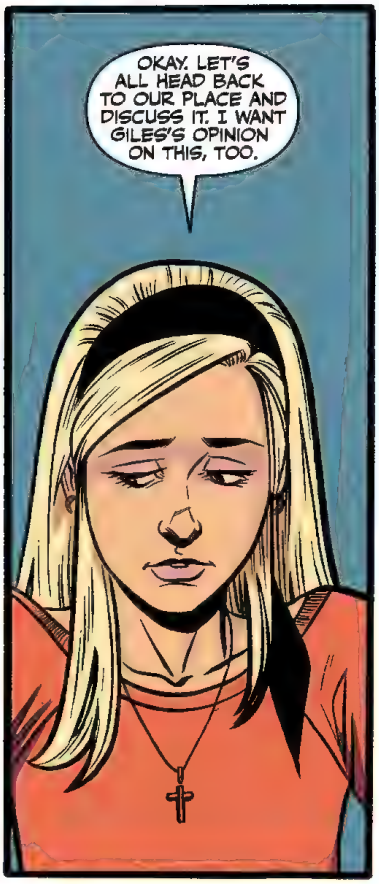

Y'KNOW WHAT'S AFFECTING US MORE THAN BEING TIRED? THE *INFIGHTING*, AND I'M SICK OF IT.
YOU GUYS DO YOUR THING--WE'LL DO OURS. CAN WE AT LEAST KEEP EACH OTHER IN THE LOOP SO WE'RE NOT ALL FIGHTING THE SAME MONSTERS?
SURE. I'M NOT TRYING TO BE A JERK. BUT I MADE IT CLEAR I WASN'T TAKING ORDERS FROM--
I KNOW. JUST...EVERYONE GET SOME REST, OKAY? WE'LL TALK MORE LATER.
HH. DOES IT *ALWAYS* HAVE TO BE THIS HARD?
YEAH, I GUESS...
PART AND PARCEL OF A STATE OF CONSTANT WAR. FRAYS THE NERVES.
ONCE AGAIN, I REMIND YOU THAT YOU POSSESS THE *VAMPYR* BOOK. THE LAWS OF THIS WORLD'S MAGIC ARE YOURS TO SHAPE.
YOUR REFUSAL TO ADD TO OUR POWER HAS CROSSED THE LINE FROM PRINCIPLE TO STUPIDITY.
NO, I'D BE STUPID TO MAKE *YOU* STRONGER JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT ME TO. OR *ANYONE*.
AGAIN, SLAYER, I DO NOT DISAGREE. GIVEN THE PROPENSITY FOR... UNFORESEEN SIDE EFFECTS, YOUR HESITANCE TO EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS IS PRUDENT.
I PROPOSE FORMALIZING THE PRIVILEGES OF EARTH'S *MYSTIC COUNCIL*. DIVIDE POWER AMONG THOSE WHO HOLD OFFICE...BUT ONLY *WHILE* THEY HOLD OFFICE.


HE'S GOT A POINT, LOVE. HAVIN' THAT KINDA ACE UP OUR SLEEVE AND NOT USIN' IT, WITH THE STATE THE WORLD'S IN, SEEMS A BIT...WELL, DAFT.
WE OF THE COUNCIL HAIL FROM VARIED PANTHEONS, POSSESSING A WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS AND PRIORITIES. OFTEN *CONFLICTING* ONES.
YOU MAY BE ASSURED NONE OF US WILL LET ANOTHER ABUSE THEIR PRIVILEGES. IF THEY DO, A SIMPLE MAJORITY STRIPS THEM OF THEIR SEAT...AND THE POWER THAT ACCOMPANIES IT.

MONARCH SPEAKS THE TRUTH. HER KIND ARE *UNABLE* TO LIE. IN FACT, WE PRESENT A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF MY ARGUMENT.
I, A VENGEANCE DEMON. SHE, QUEEN OF THE WOODLAND SPRITES, WHO LIVE FOR PEACE, BEAUTY, AND REVELRY.
OUR VALUES ARE IN VIRTUAL OPPOSITION. YET WE MANAGE TO WORK TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY. A SKILL YOU AND YOUR "FRIENDS" ARE CLEARLY STILL MASTERING.

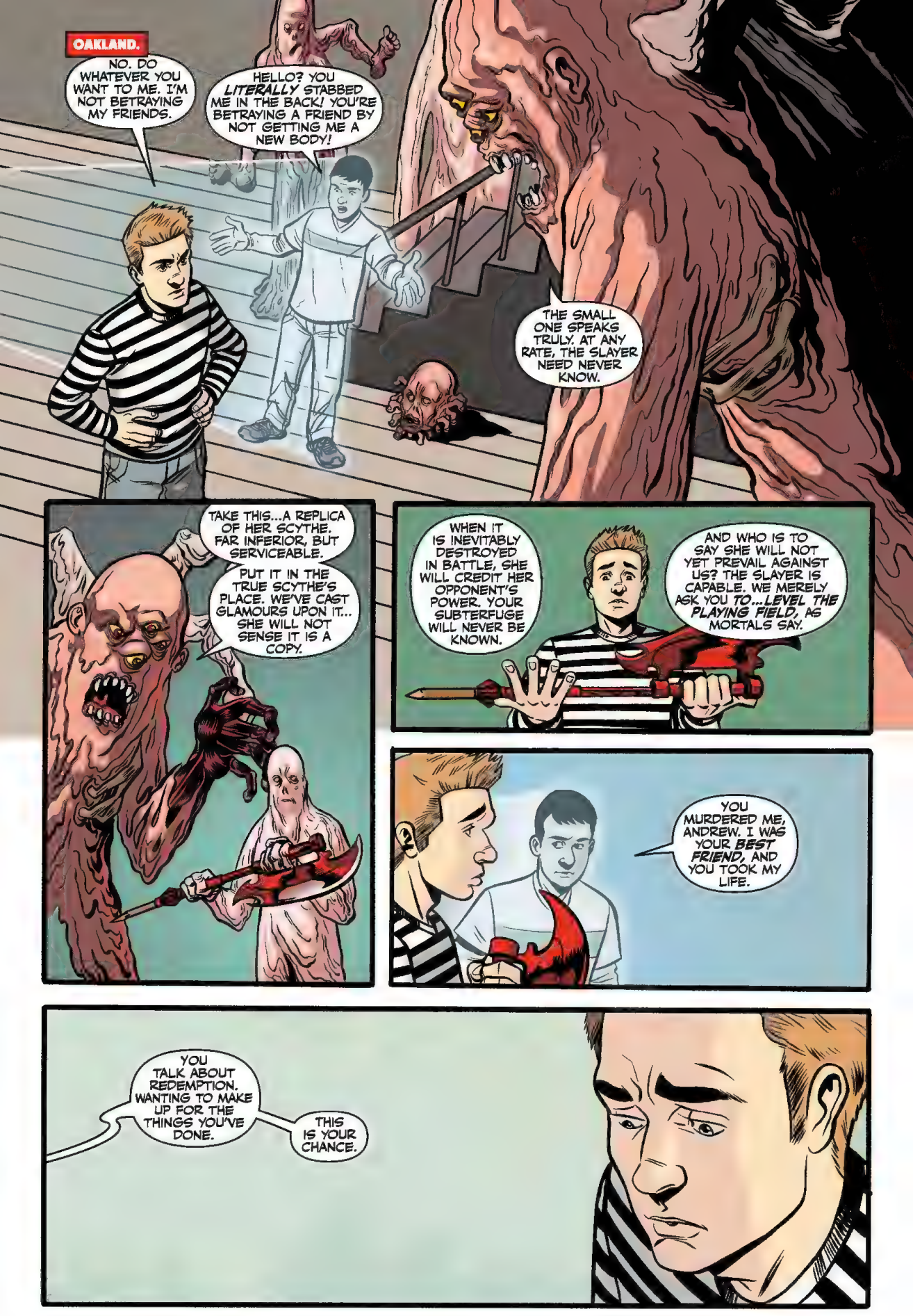
CHECKS AND BALANCES. THE CORNERSTONE OF YOUR FASCINATING SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. A SOLID FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO BUILD SUCCESS.
I AGREE WITH THE BRAHMA. YES, THERE IS RISK, GIVEN THE INHERENT POTENTIAL FOR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES. BUT OUR ENEMIES OFFER FAR WORSE OUTCOMES.
AND I SUPPOSE YOU TWO AGREE WITH THEM?



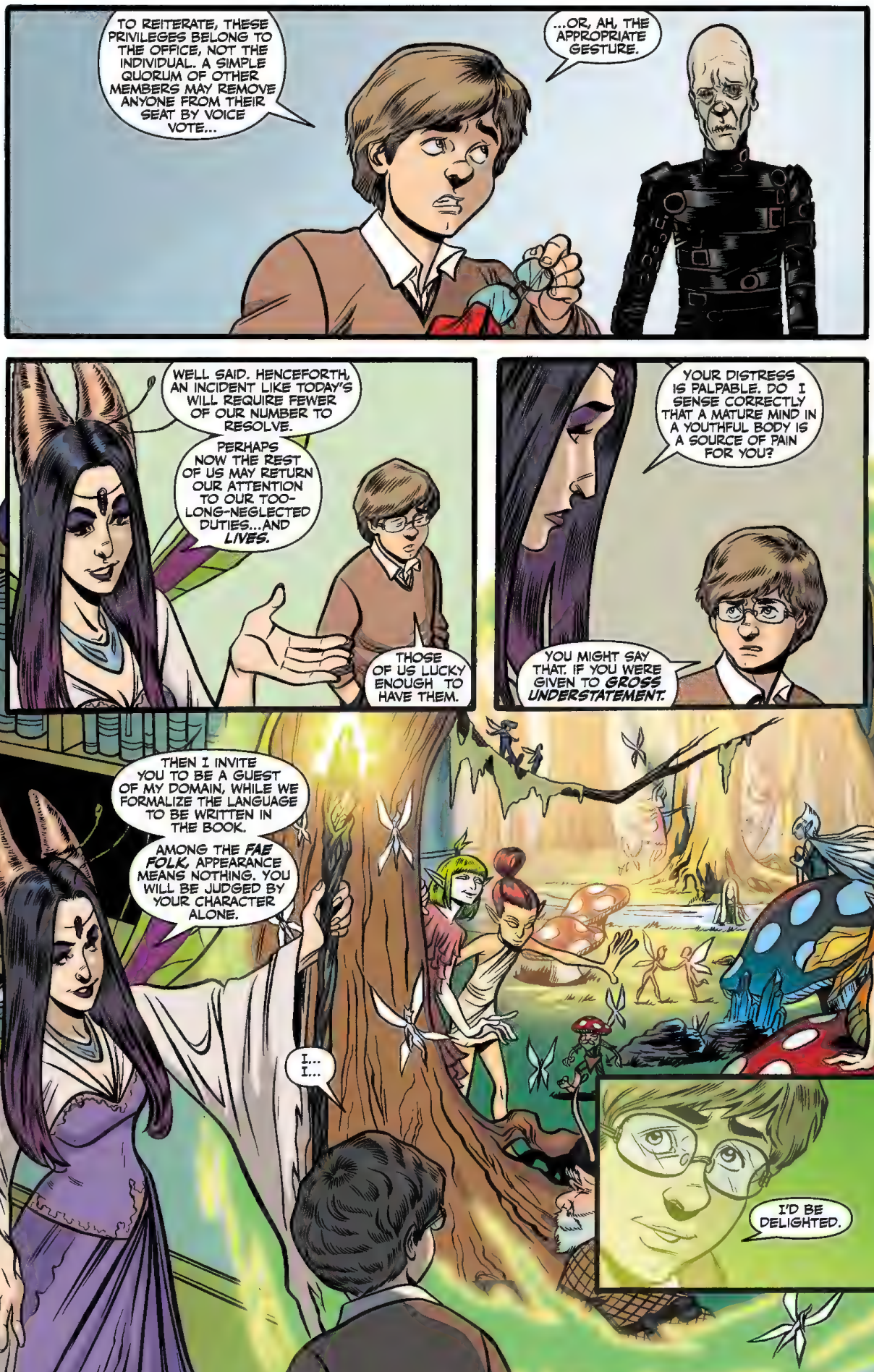

OKAY. LET'S ALL HEAD BACK TO OUR PLACE AND DISCUSS IT. I WANT GILES'S OPINION ON THIS, TOO.

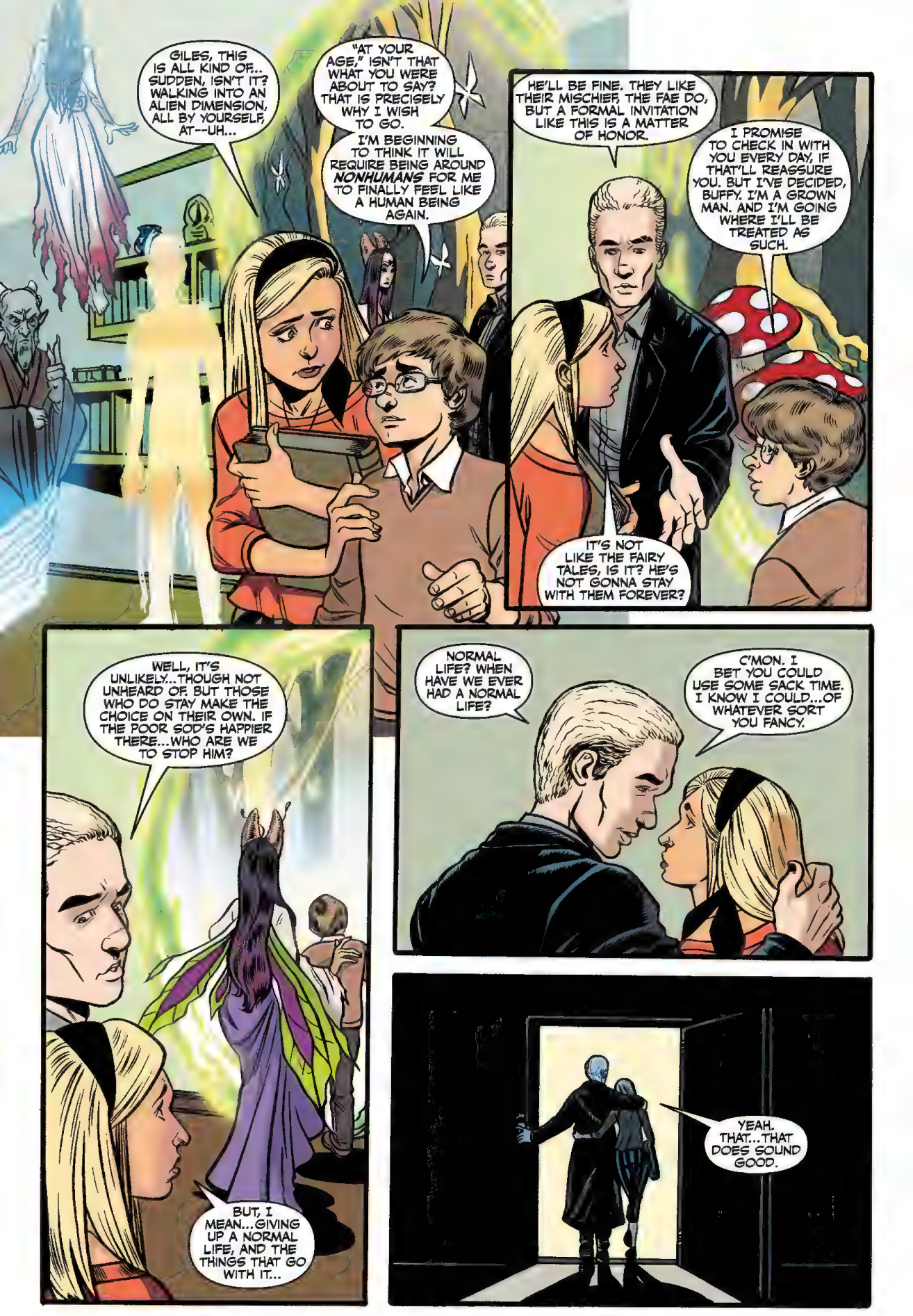
BUFFY, WILLOW, AND DAWN'S APARTMENT.
GUH. THIS IS ALL BLURRING TOGETHER.
I KNOW. I ONLY SIGNED UP FOR PSYCH 'CAUSE I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HELP ME IN ADVERTISING. I DIDN'T REALIZE THERE'D BE SCIENCE.
COME ON, GUYS. WE CAN TAKE A BREAK, BUT WE NEED TO GET THROUGH THIS.
YOU'RE HARDCORE DEDICATED, DAWN. YOU ACTUALLY THINKING OF BEING A SHRINK FOR, LIKE, A LIVING?
WELL... MAYBE A GRIEF COUNSELOR.
OH, WOW...YOU LOST YOUR MOM, AND NOW YOU WANT TO HELP OTHERS WITH THEIR TRAGEDIES. THAT'S SO COOL. YOU'RE LIKE A WELL-ADJUSTED BATMAN!
YEAH, MY MOM'S A BIG PART OF IT. I'VE ALSO...BEEN THROUGH A LOT OF STUFF MOST PEOPLE PROBABLY HAVEN'T.
WITH THE WORLD CHANGING LIKE IT IS, I FIGURE THERE'LL BE FOLKS WHO ARE PRETTY SHAKEN UP BY--
GAAHHH!
UH... BAD TIME?

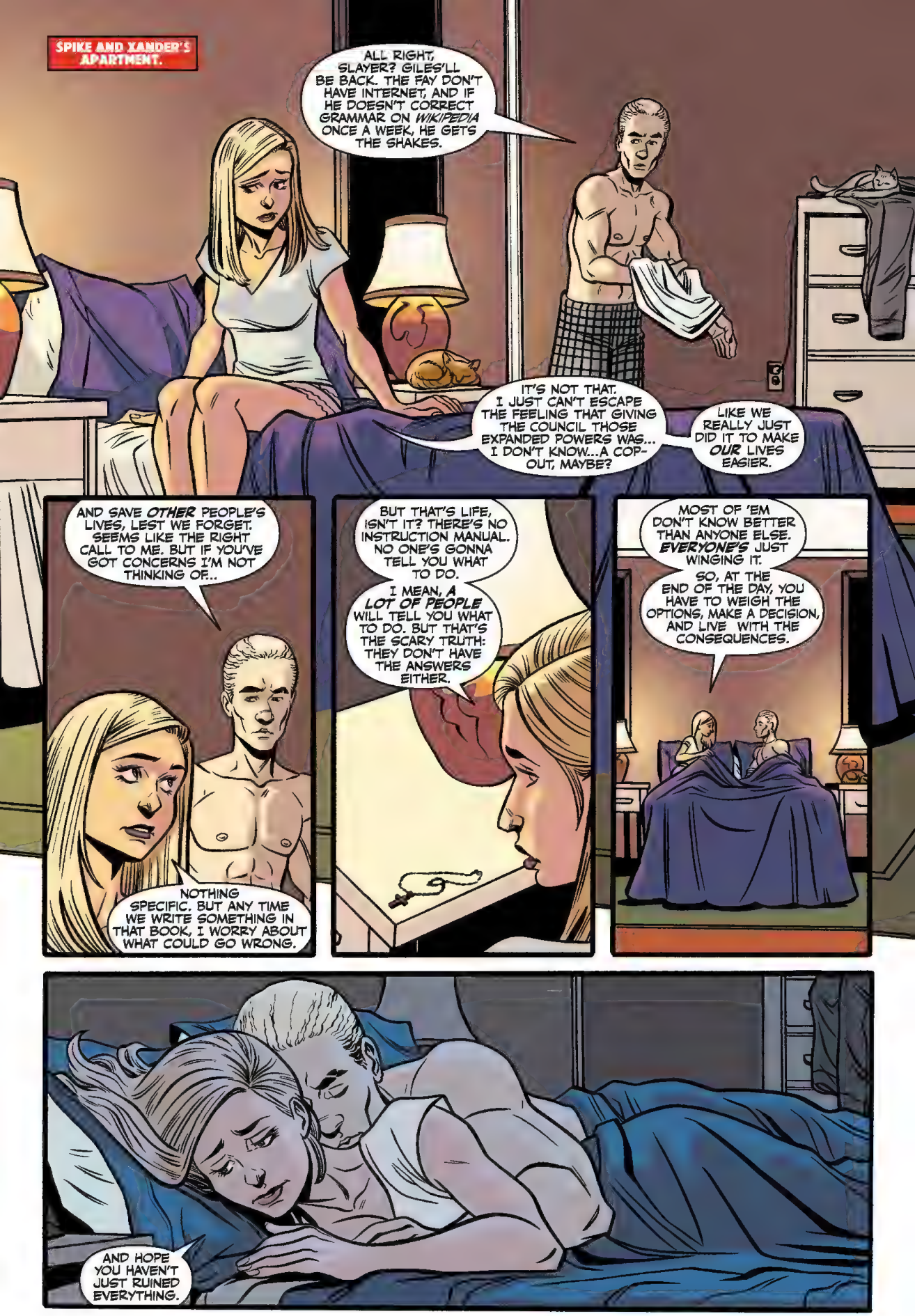
STUDY GROUP. I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT.
RIGHT. SORRY. VERY SORRY.
OH MY GOD, I SAW HER! NOW WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!
THAT'S ONLY IF YOU WATCH MY WEDDING VIDEO. WHICH IS A SHAME, BECAUSE IT'S BEAUTIFULLY SHOT.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER WENT WITH BLACK AND WHITE. MY HUSBAND HATED IT. IN FACT, THAT'S WHY HE DROWNED ME. BUT IT CAME OUT SO PRETTY!
WE SHOULD LEAVE.
THIS LOOKS IMPORTANT. WE CAN GO TO THE COFFEE SHOP--
DAWN, NO. GILES'S APARTMENT IS FINE FOR US.
WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS IMPORTANT. DON'T LET ANYONE TELL YOU IT'S NOT.
HOLD ON TO IT. FIGHT FOR IT.
UM... OKAY?
YOUR SISTER'S HOT. SINGLE?
DATING A VAMPIRE.
PSYCH IS TOTES THE RIGHT MAJOR FOR YOU.

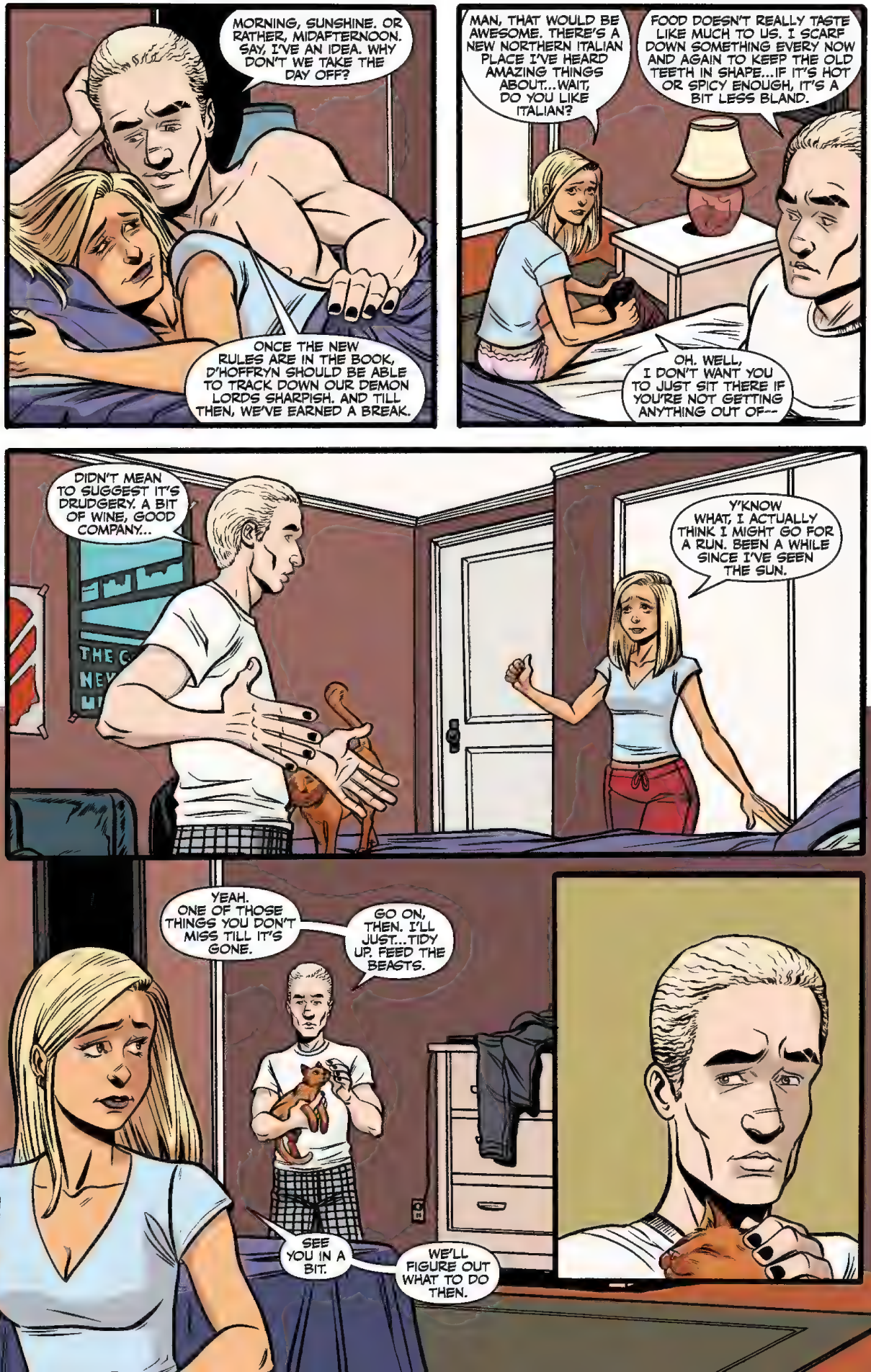

OAKLAND.
NO. DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO ME. I'M NOT BETRAYING MY FRIENDS.
HELLO? YOU *LITERALLY* STABBED ME IN THE BACK! YOU'RE BETRAYING A FRIEND BY NOT GETTING ME A NEW BODY!
THE SMALL ONE SPEAKS TRULY. AT ANY RATE, THE SLAYER NEED NEVER KNOW.
TAKE THIS...A REPLICA OF HER SCYTHE. FAR INFERIOR, BUT SERVICEABLE.
PUT IT IN THE TRUE SCYTHE'S PLACE. WE'VE CAST GLAMOURS UPON IT... SHE WILL NOT SENSE IT IS A COPY.
WHEN IT IS INEVITABLY DESTROYED IN BATTLE, SHE WILL CREDIT HER OPPONENT'S POWER. YOUR SUBTERFUGE WILL NEVER BE KNOWN.
AND WHO IS TO SAY SHE WILL NOT YET PREVAIL AGAINST US? THE SLAYER IS CAPABLE. WE MERELY ASK YOU *TO...LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD*, AS MORTALS SAY.
YOU MURDERED ME, ANDREW. I WAS YOUR *BEST FRIEND*, AND YOU TOOK MY LIFE.
YOU TALK ABOUT REDEMPTION. WANTING TO MAKE UP FOR THE THINGS YOU'VE DONE.
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE.

GILES'S APARTMENT.
THEN WE'RE DECIDED. D'HOFFRYN, AS HEAD OF THE COUNCIL, YOU WILL BE GRANTED THE POWER TO DETECT AND PINPOINT THE USAGE OF CONCENTRATED MYSTIC ENERGY.
MONARCH, YOU SHALL HAVE THE ABILITY TO DRAIN THE MAGIC POWER OF ANY BEING NOT NATIVE TO THIS DIMENSION.
TO COUNTER PURELY *PHYSICAL* ASSAULTS, KEIKO WILL HENCEFORTH BE ABLE TO ABSORB AND REDIRECT THE KINETIC ENERGY OF AN ATTACK.
YAY!
THE *QUIET MAN* SHALL POSSESS THE POWER TO RETURN ANY BEING TO ITS NATIVE DIMENSION.
AND TO THE BRAHMA GOES THE ABILITY TO SENSE ANY OPPONENT'S GREATEST WEAKNESS...
...WHILE MATANGO IS GRANTED INVULNERABILITY TO MAGICAL ATTACKS, THOUGH NOT PHYSICAL ONES.
PLEASE REMOVE YOUR SPORES FROM MY SINK.


TO REITERATE, THESE PRIVILEGES BELONG TO THE OFFICE, NOT THE INDIVIDUAL. A SIMPLE QUORUM OF OTHER MEMBERS MAY REMOVE ANYONE FROM THEIR SEAT BY VOICE VOTE...
...OR, AH, THE APPROPRIATE GESTURE.
WELL SAID. HENCEFORTH, AN INCIDENT LIKE TODAY'S WILL REQUIRE FEWER OF OUR NUMBER TO RESOLVE.
PERHAPS NOW THE REST OF US MAY RETURN OUR ATTENTION TO OUR TOO-LONG-NEGLECTED DUTIES...AND *LIVES.*
THOSE OF US LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE THEM.
YOUR DISTRESS IS PALPABLE. DO I SENSE CORRECTLY THAT A MATURE MIND IN A YOUTHFUL BODY IS A SOURCE OF PAIN FOR YOU?
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT. IF YOU WERE GIVEN TO ***GROSS UNDERSTATEMENT.***
THEN I INVITE YOU TO BE A GUEST OF MY DOMAIN, WHILE WE FORMALIZE THE LANGUAGE TO BE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK.
AMONG THE ***FAE FOLK,*** APPEARANCE MEANS NOTHING. YOU WILL BE JUDGED BY YOUR CHARACTER ALONE.
I... I...
I'D BE DELIGHTED.

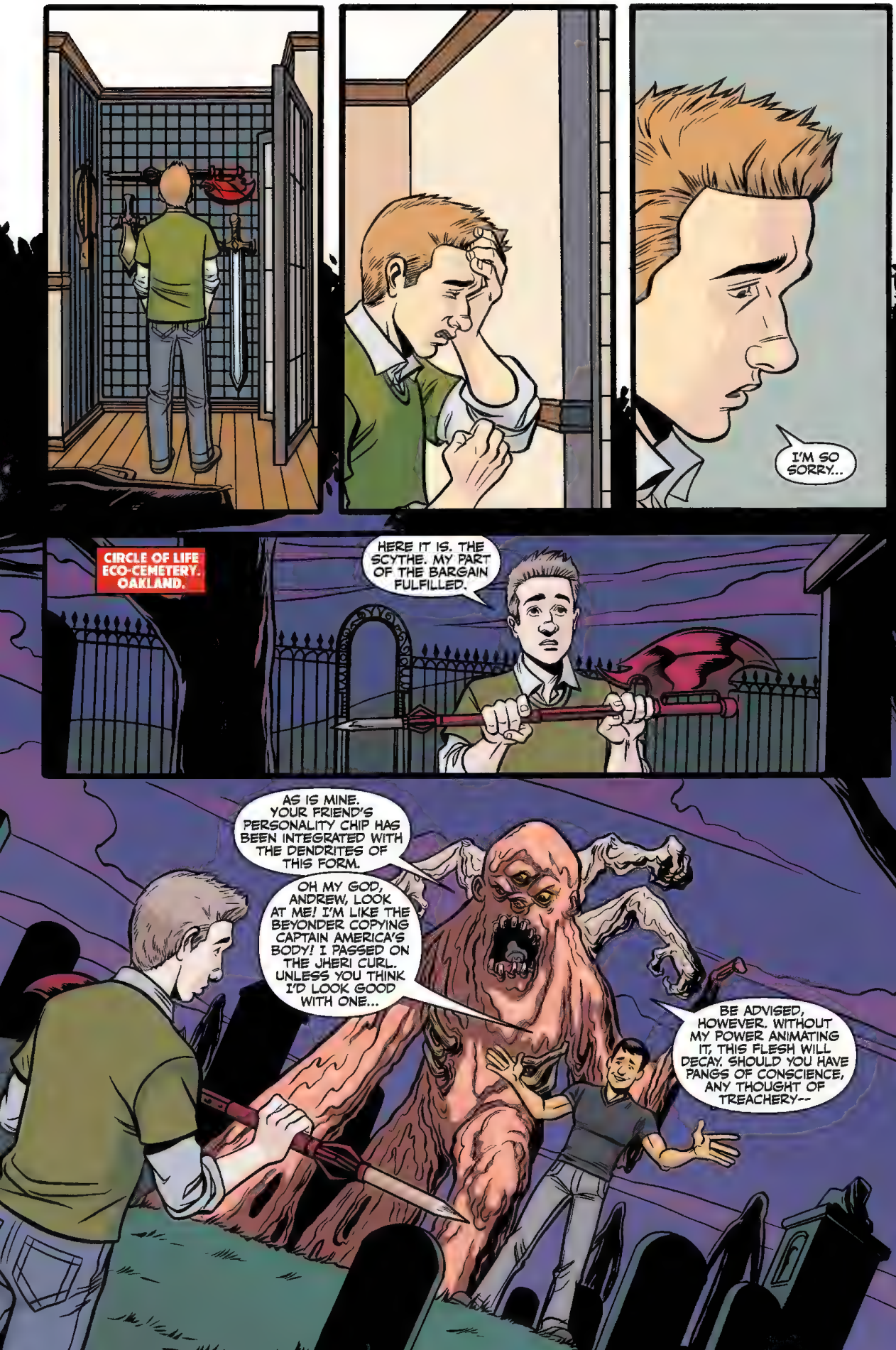

GILES, THIS IS ALL KIND OF... SUDDEN, ISN'T IT? WALKING INTO AN ALIEN DIMENSION, ALL BY YOURSELF, AT--UH...
"AT YOUR AGE," ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY? THAT IS PRECISELY WHY I WISH TO GO.
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK IT WILL REQUIRE BEING AROUND *NONHUMANS* FOR ME TO FINALLY FEEL LIKE A HUMAN BEING AGAIN.
HE'LL BE FINE. THEY LIKE THEIR MISCHIEF, THE FAE DO, BUT A FORMAL INVITATION LIKE THIS IS A MATTER OF HONOR.
I PROMISE TO CHECK IN WITH YOU EVERY DAY, IF THAT'LL REASSURE YOU. BUT I'VE DECIDED, BUFFY. I'M A GROWN MAN. AND I'M GOING WHERE I'LL BE TREATED AS SUCH.
IT'S NOT LIKE THE FAIRY TALES, IS IT? HE'S NOT GONNA STAY WITH THEM FOREVER?
WELL, IT'S UNLIKELY...THOUGH NOT UNHEARD OF. BUT THOSE WHO DO STAY MAKE THE CHOICE ON THEIR OWN. IF THE POOR SOD'S HAPPIER THERE...WHO ARE WE TO STOP HIM?
BUT, I MEAN...GIVING UP A NORMAL LIFE, AND THE THINGS THAT GO WITH IT...
NORMAL LIFE? WHEN HAVE WE EVER HAD A NORMAL LIFE?
C'MON. I BET YOU COULD USE SOME SACK TIME. I KNOW I COULD...OF WHATEVER SORT YOU FANCY.
YEAH. THAT...THAT DOES SOUND GOOD.


SPIKE AND XANDER'S APARTMENT.
ALL RIGHT, SLAYER? GILES'LL BE BACK. THE FAY DON'T HAVE INTERNET, AND IF HE DOESN'T CORRECT GRAMMAR ON WIKIPEDIA ONCE A WEEK, HE GETS THE SHAKES.
IT'S NOT THAT. I JUST CAN'T ESCAPE THE FEELING THAT GIVING THE COUNCIL THOSE EXPANDED POWERS WAS... I DON'T KNOW...A COP-OUT, MAYBE?
LIKE WE REALLY JUST DID IT TO MAKE OUR LIVES EASIER.
AND SAVE OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES, LEST WE FORGET. SEEMS LIKE THE RIGHT CALL TO ME. BUT IF YOU'VE GOT CONCERNS I'M NOT THINKING OF...
NOTHING SPECIFIC. BUT ANY TIME WE WRITE SOMETHING IN THAT BOOK, I WORRY ABOUT WHAT COULD GO WRONG.
BUT THAT'S LIFE, ISN'T IT? THERE'S NO INSTRUCTION MANUAL. NO ONE'S GONNA TELL YOU WHAT TO DO.
I MEAN, A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO. BUT THAT'S THE SCARY TRUTH: THEY DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS EITHER.
MOST OF 'EM DON'T KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE. EVERYONE'S JUST WINGING IT.
SO, AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU HAVE TO WEIGH THE OPTIONS, MAKE A DECISION, AND LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES.
AND HOPE YOU HAVEN'T JUST RUINED EVERYTHING.


MORNING, SUNSHINE. OR RATHER, MIDAFTERNOON. SAY, I'VE AN IDEA. WHY DON'T WE TAKE THE DAY OFF?
ONCE THE NEW RULES ARE IN THE BOOK, D'HOFFRYN SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRACK DOWN OUR DEMON LORDS SHARPISH. AND TILL THEN, WE'VE EARNED A BREAK.
MAN, THAT WOULD BE AWESOME. THERE'S A NEW NORTHERN ITALIAN PLACE I'VE HEARD AMAZING THINGS ABOUT...WAIT, DO YOU LIKE ITALIAN?
FOOD DOESN'T REALLY TASTE LIKE MUCH TO US. I SCARF DOWN SOMETHING EVERY NOW AND AGAIN TO KEEP THE OLD TEETH IN SHAPE...IF IT'S HOT OR SPICY ENOUGH, IT'S A BIT LESS BLAND.
OH. WELL, I DON'T WANT YOU TO JUST SIT THERE IF YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANYTHING OUT OF---
DIDN'T MEAN TO SUGGEST IT'S DRUDGERY. A BIT OF WINE, GOOD COMPANY...
Y'KNOW WHAT, I ACTUALLY THINK I MIGHT GO FOR A RUN. BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE SEEN THE SUN.
YEAH. ONE OF THOSE THINGS YOU DON'T MISS TILL IT'S GONE.
GO ON, THEN. I'LL JUST...TIDY UP. FEED THE BEASTS.
SEE YOU IN A BIT.
WE'LL FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO THEN.

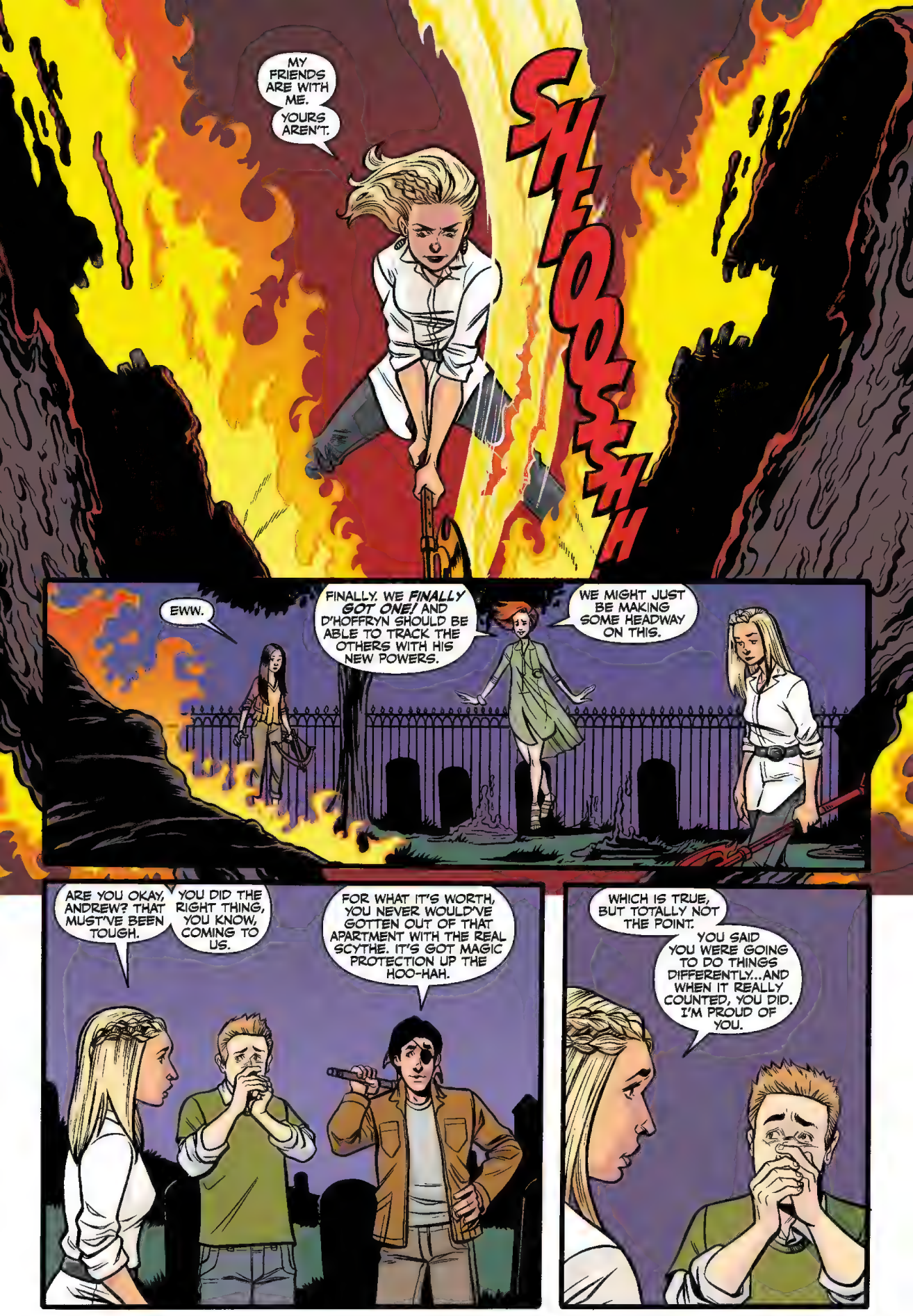
BUFFY'S APARTMENT.
HEY, DAWN. HOPE WE DIDN'T MESS UP YOUR STUDYING TOO MUCH.
NAH. I TOLD THEM THE GUY WITH THE SEWN-UP EYES COMES AFTER PEOPLE WHO GET BAD GRADES. THEY WERE PRETTY SURE I WAS KIDDING, BUT MAN, DID THEY BUCKLE DOWN.
WILLOW DIDN'T COME HOME, DID SHE?
SPENDS MOST OF HER NIGHTS AT LAKE'S THESE DAYS. YOU GUYS FIGHTING AGAIN?
I DON'T KNOW IF I'D CALL IT THAT. IT'S LIKE...WE DON'T WANT TO FIGHT, BUT WE KEEP BUTTING HEADS ANYWAY, YOU KNOW?
IT'S A WEIRD TIME. EVERYONE'S TIRED. IT'LL GET BETTER.
GOTTA RUN. MY FRIENDS ARE WAITING.
YEAH.
I GOTTA RUN TOO.

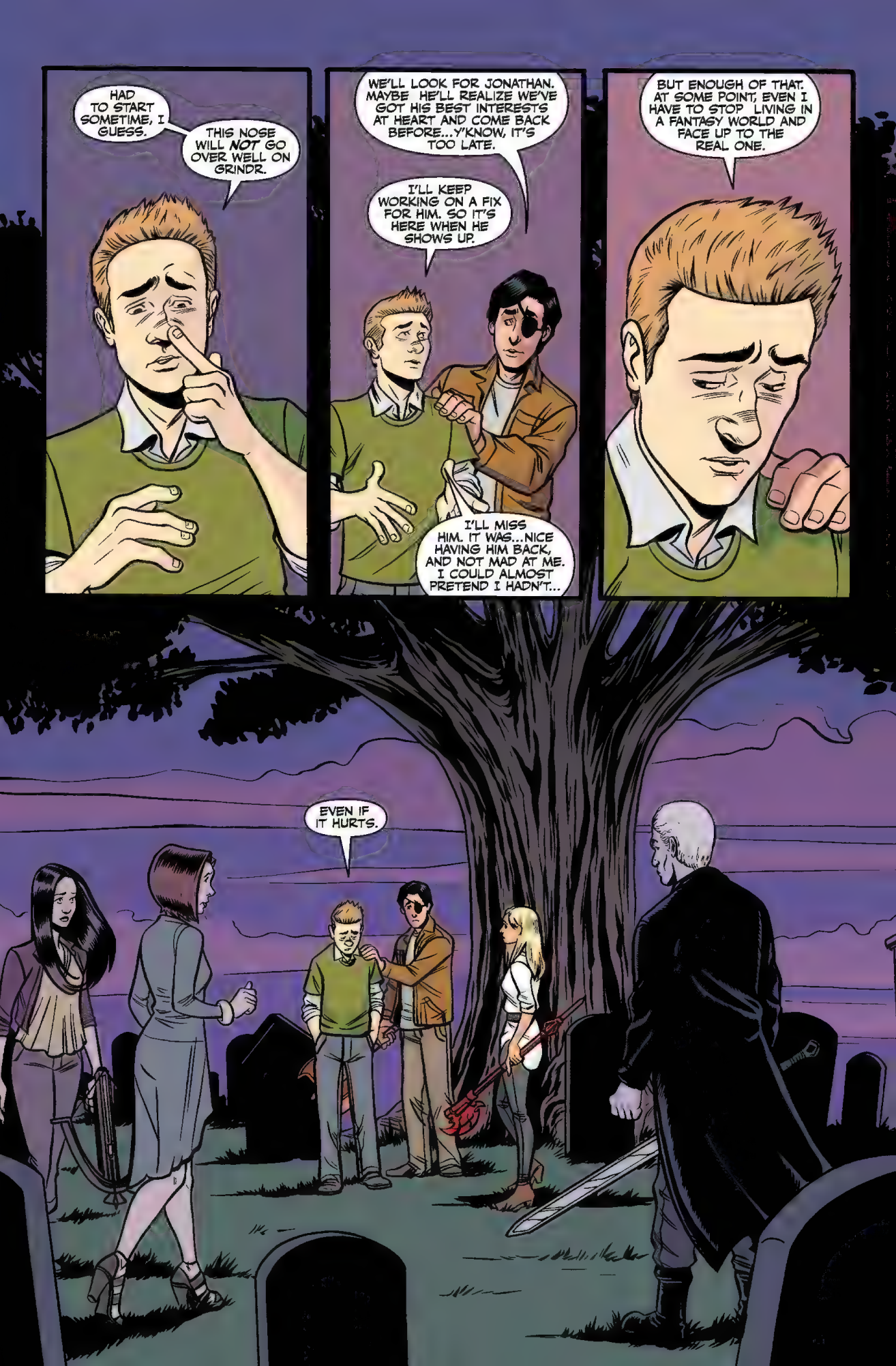
I WANT NORMAL, TOO. AND I WANT IT WITH YOU.

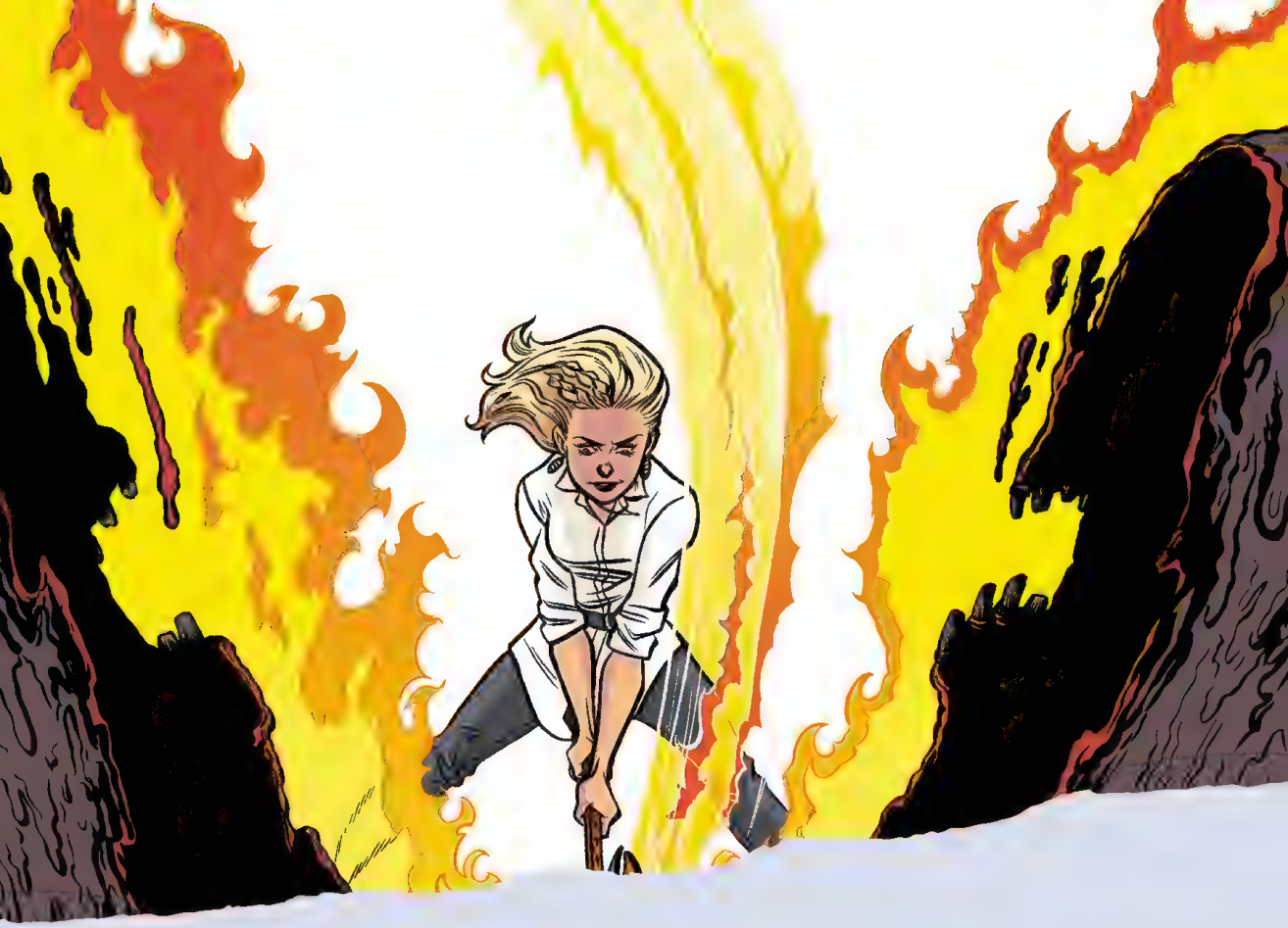

I'M SO SORRY...
CIRCLE OF LIFE ECO-CEMETERY. OAKLAND.
HERE IT IS. THE SCYTHE. MY PART OF THE BARGAIN FULFILLED.
AS IS MINE. YOUR FRIEND'S PERSONALITY CHIP HAS BEEN INTEGRATED WITH THE DENDRITES OF THIS FORM.
OH MY GOD, ANDREW, LOOK AT ME! I'M LIKE THE BEYONDER COPYING CAPTAIN AMERICA'S BODY! I PASSED ON THE JHERI CURL. UNLESS YOU THINK I'D LOOK GOOD WITH ONE...
BE ADVISED, HOWEVER. WITHOUT MY POWER ANIMATING IT, THIS FLESH WILL DECAY. SHOULD YOU HAVE PANGS OF CONSCIENCE, ANY THOUGHT OF TREACHERY--

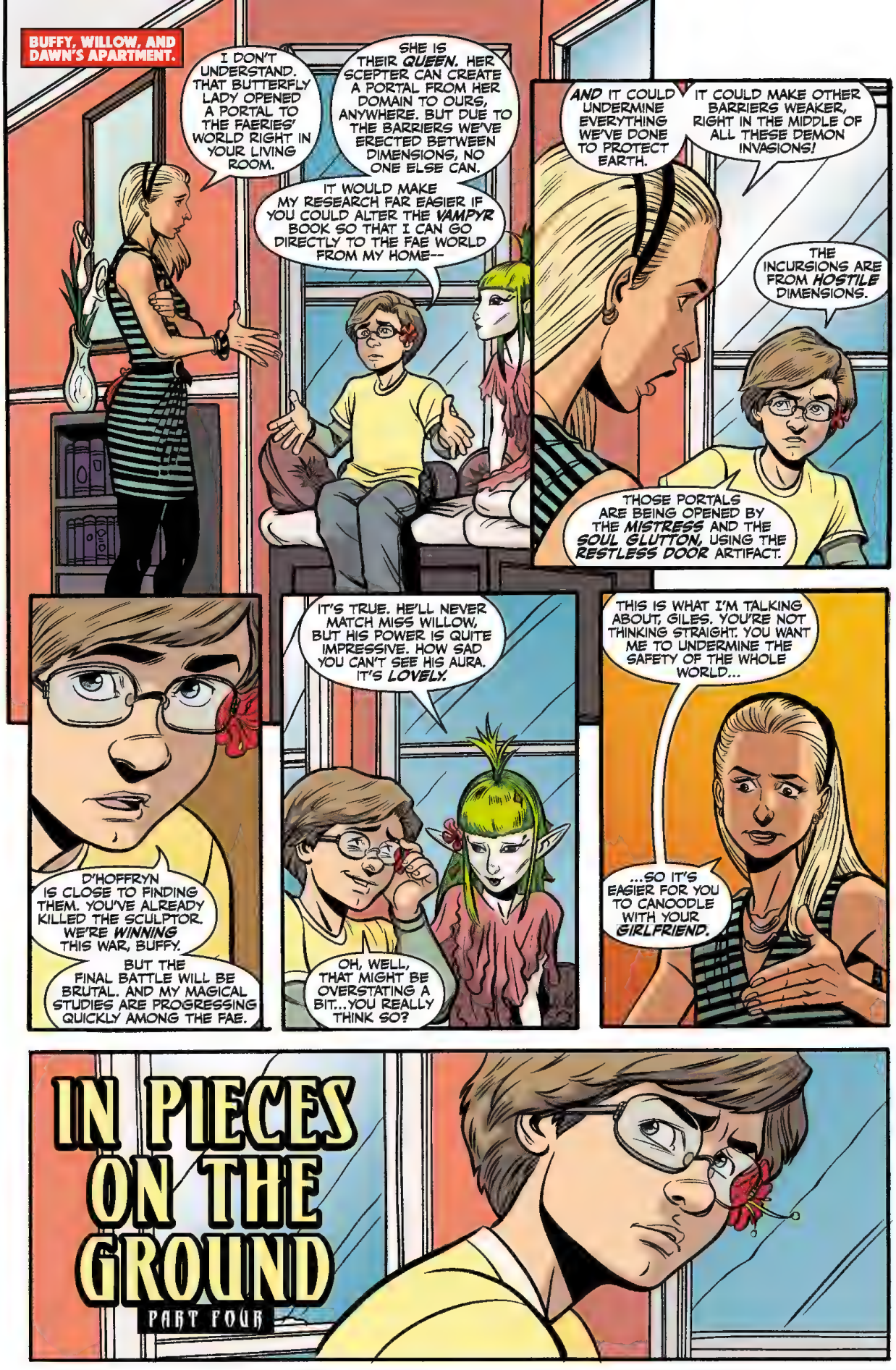
KINDA ALREADY DID.
HEY, YOU HELD UP YOUR END. YOU BROUGHT HIM THE REAL SCYTHE.
HE'S JUST GONNA GET IT SHARP SIDE FIRST.
YOU DARE--?
ANDREW? H-HOW COULD YOU? YOU HEARD HIM! I'LL DIE!
I KNOW. AND I AM MORE SORRY THAN I CAN SAY. BUT I COULDN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT.
I CAN'T KEEP BEING THAT GUY WHO THINKS HE CAN MAKE UP FOR OLD SINS WITH NEW ONES.
YOU'RE NOT JONATHAN. I KILLED JONATHAN.
AND THERE'S NO WAY I CAN EVER MAKE THAT RIGHT.

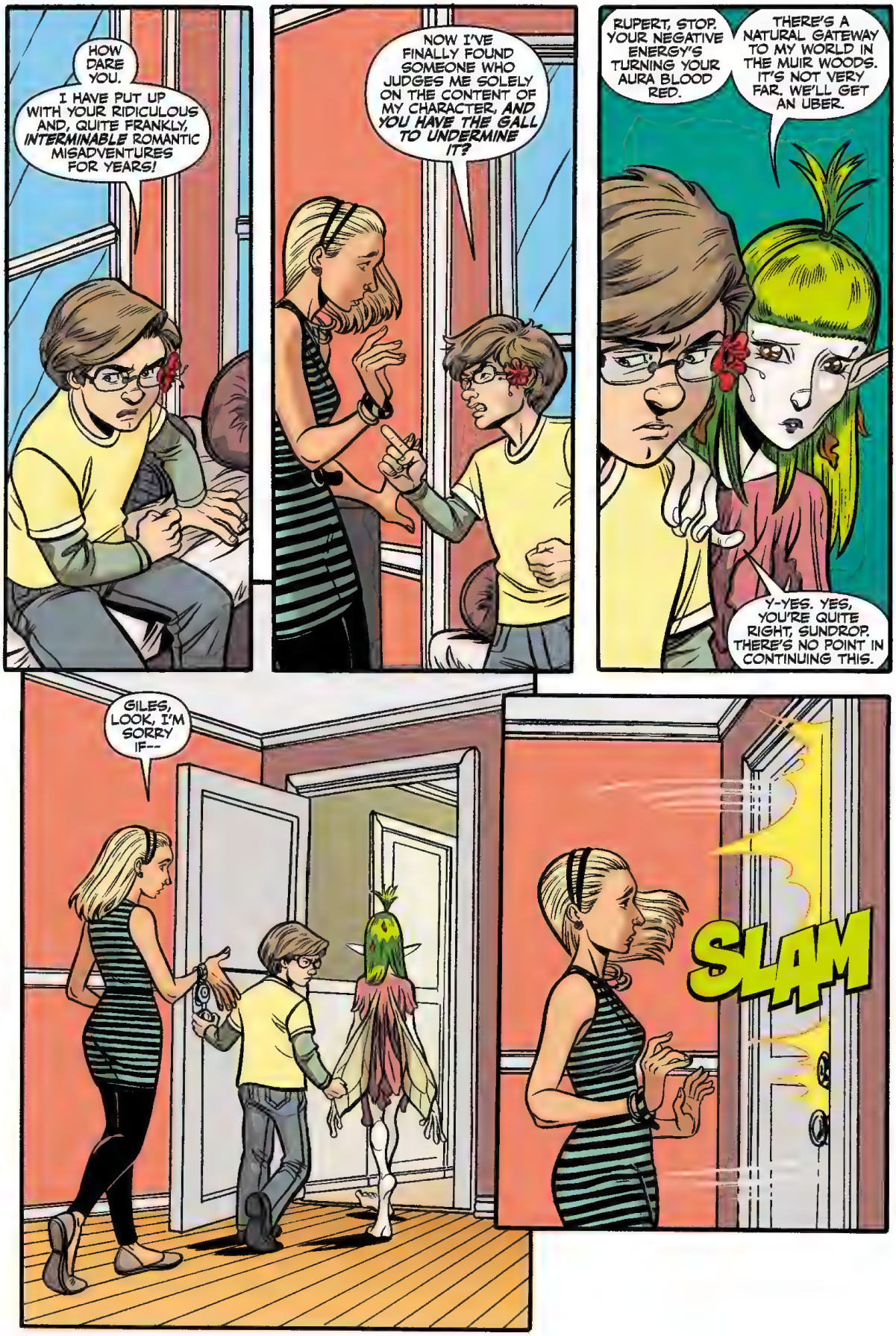
NOT CONDEMNING ME TO A HORRIBLE DEATH WOULD'VE BEEN A START! I FEEL LIKE JONATHAN LEVINSON! REAL OR NOT REAL, THAT SHOULD COUNT FOR SOMETHING!
IF I CAN'T FIGURE OUT A WAY TO PRESERVE THIS BODY, I'LL...I'LL BUILD YOU A ROBOT ONE. OR CREATE AN A.I. ENVIRONMENT FOR YOU TO LIVE IN UNTIL--
I DON'T WANT THAT! I WANT THIS!
WE'LL WORK SOMETHING OUT--OH, MY NOSE!
NO! THAT'S IT! I'M DONE TRUSTING YOU!
ALL YOU'VE EVER DONE IS SCREW ME OVER! I ALWAYS END UP DEAD, OR HUMILIATED, OR ALONE!
FROM NOW ON, I DO WHAT EVERYONE ELSE SEEMS TO: LOOK OUT FOR MYSELF!
I AM THE SCULPTOR! THE LORD OF ALL FLESH! YOU ARE BUT MEAT! BY WHAT MADNESS DO YOU HOPE TO STAND AGAINST ME?
EASY.

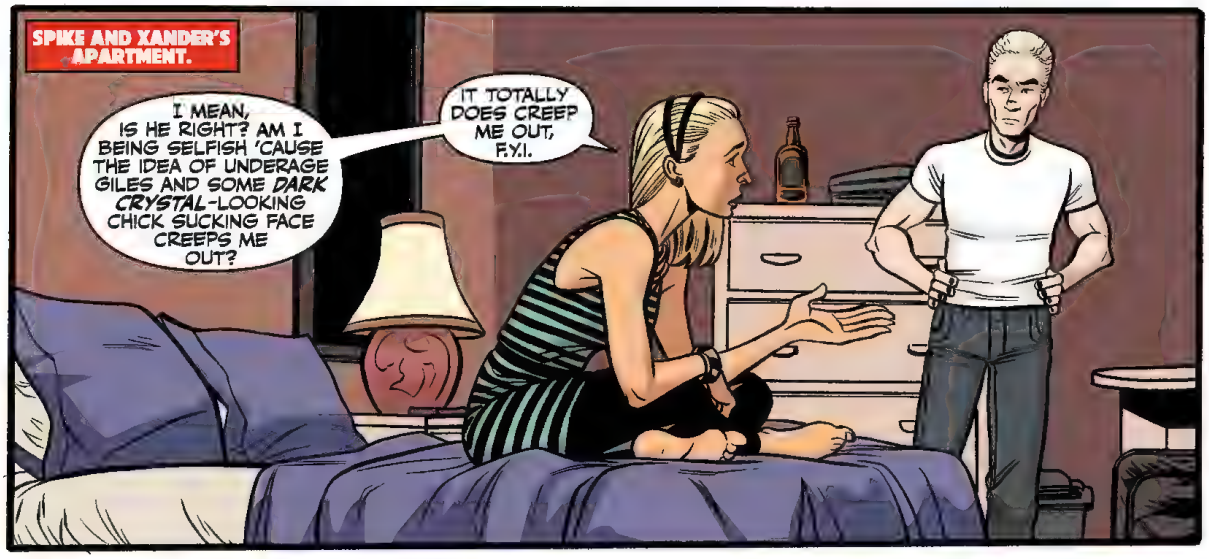

MY FRIENDS ARE WITH ME.
YOURS AREN'T.
SHOOSHH
EWW.
FINALLY. WE FINALLY GOT ONE! AND D'HOFFRYN SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRACK THE OTHERS WITH HIS NEW POWERS.
WE MIGHT JUST BE MAKING SOME HEADWAY ON THIS.
ARE YOU OKAY, ANDREW? THAT MUST'VE BEEN TOUGH.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, YOU KNOW, COMING TO US.
FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, YOU NEVER WOULD'VE GOTTEN OUT OF THAT APARTMENT WITH THE REAL SCYTHE. IT'S GOT MAGIC PROTECTION UP THE HOO-HAH.
WHICH IS TRUE, BUT TOTALLY NOT THE POINT.
YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY...AND WHEN IT REALLY COUNTED, YOU DID. I'M PROUD OF YOU.


HAD TO START SOMETIME, I GUESS.
THIS NOSE WILL NOT GO OVER WELL ON GRINDR.
WE'LL LOOK FOR JONATHAN. MAYBE HE'LL REALIZE WE'VE GOT HIS BEST INTERESTS AT HEART AND COME BACK BEFORE...Y'KNOW, IT'S TOO LATE.
I'LL KEEP WORKING ON A FIX FOR HIM. SO IT'S HERE WHEN HE SHOWS UP.
I'LL MISS HIM. IT WAS...NICE HAVING HIM BACK, AND NOT MAD AT ME. I COULD ALMOST PRETEND I HADN'T...
BUT ENOUGH OF THAT. AT SOME POINT, EVEN I HAVE TO STOP LIVING IN A FANTASY WORLD AND FACE UP TO THE REAL ONE.
EVEN IF IT HURTS.

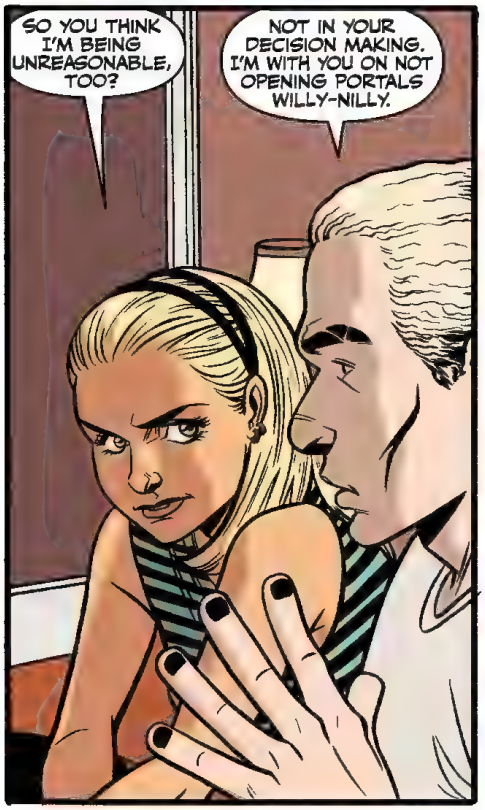


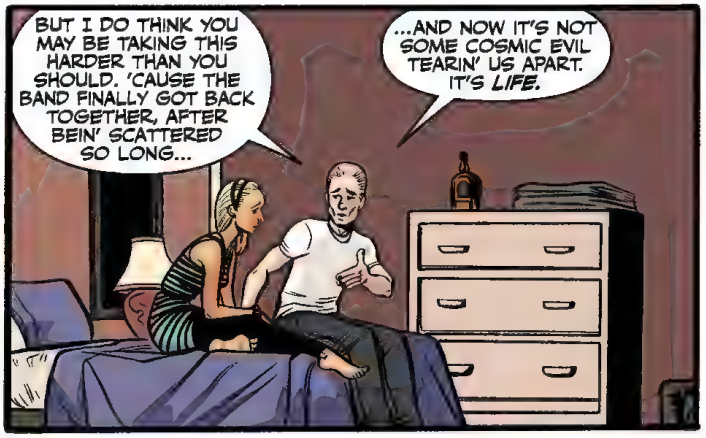

BUFFY, WILLOW, AND DAWN'S APARTMENT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THAT BUTTERFLY LADY OPENED A PORTAL TO THE FAERIES' WORLD RIGHT IN YOUR LIVING ROOM.
SHE IS THEIR QUEEN. HER SCEPTER CAN CREATE A PORTAL FROM HER DOMAIN TO OURS, ANYWHERE. BUT DUE TO THE BARRIERS WE'VE ERECTED BETWEEN DIMENSIONS, NO ONE ELSE CAN.
IT WOULD MAKE MY RESEARCH FAR EASIER IF YOU COULD ALTER THE VAMPYR BOOK SO THAT I CAN GO DIRECTLY TO THE FAE WORLD FROM MY HOME--
AND IT COULD UNDERMINE EVERYTHING WE'VE DONE TO PROTECT EARTH.
IT COULD MAKE OTHER BARRIERS WEAKER, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THESE DEMON INVASIONS!
THE INCURSIONS ARE FROM HOSTILE DIMENSIONS.
THOSE PORTALS ARE BEING OPENED BY THE MISTRESS AND THE SOUL GLUTTON, USING THE RESTLESS DOOR ARTIFACT.
D'HOFFRYN IS CLOSE TO FINDING THEM. YOU'VE ALREADY KILLED THE SCULPTOR. WE'RE WINNING THIS WAR, BUFFY.
BUT THE FINAL BATTLE WILL BE BRUTAL. AND MY MAGICAL STUDIES ARE PROGRESSING QUICKLY AMONG THE FAE.
IT'S TRUE. HE'LL NEVER MATCH MISS WILLOW, BUT HIS POWER IS QUITE IMPRESSIVE. HOW SAD YOU CAN'T SEE HIS AURA. IT'S LOVELY.
OH, WELL, THAT MIGHT BE OVERSTATING A BIT...YOU REALLY THINK SO?
THIS IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, GILES. YOU'RE NOT THINKING STRAIGHT. YOU WANT ME TO UNDERMINE THE SAFETY OF THE WHOLE WORLD...
...SO IT'S EASIER FOR YOU TO CANOODLE WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND.
IN PIECES ON THE GROUND
PART FOUR

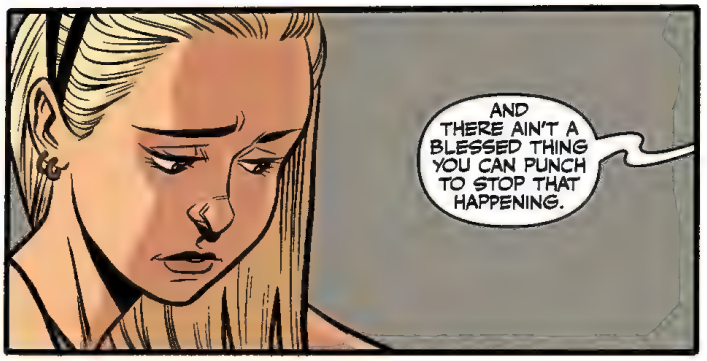

HOW DARE YOU.
I HAVE PUT UP WITH YOUR RIDICULOUS AND, QUITE FRANKLY, *INTERMINABLE* ROMANTIC MISADVENTURES FOR YEARS!
NOW I'VE FINALLY FOUND SOMEONE WHO JUDGES ME SOLELY ON THE CONTENT OF MY CHARACTER, *AND YOU HAVE THE GALL TO UNDERMINE IT?*
RUPERT, STOP. YOUR NEGATIVE ENERGY'S TURNING YOUR AURA BLOOD RED.
THERE'S A NATURAL GATEWAY TO MY WORLD IN THE MUIR WOODS. IT'S NOT VERY FAR. WE'LL GET AN UBER.
Y-YES. YES, YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, SUNDROP. THERE'S NO POINT IN CONTINUING THIS.
GILES, LOOK, I'M SORRY IF--
SLAM

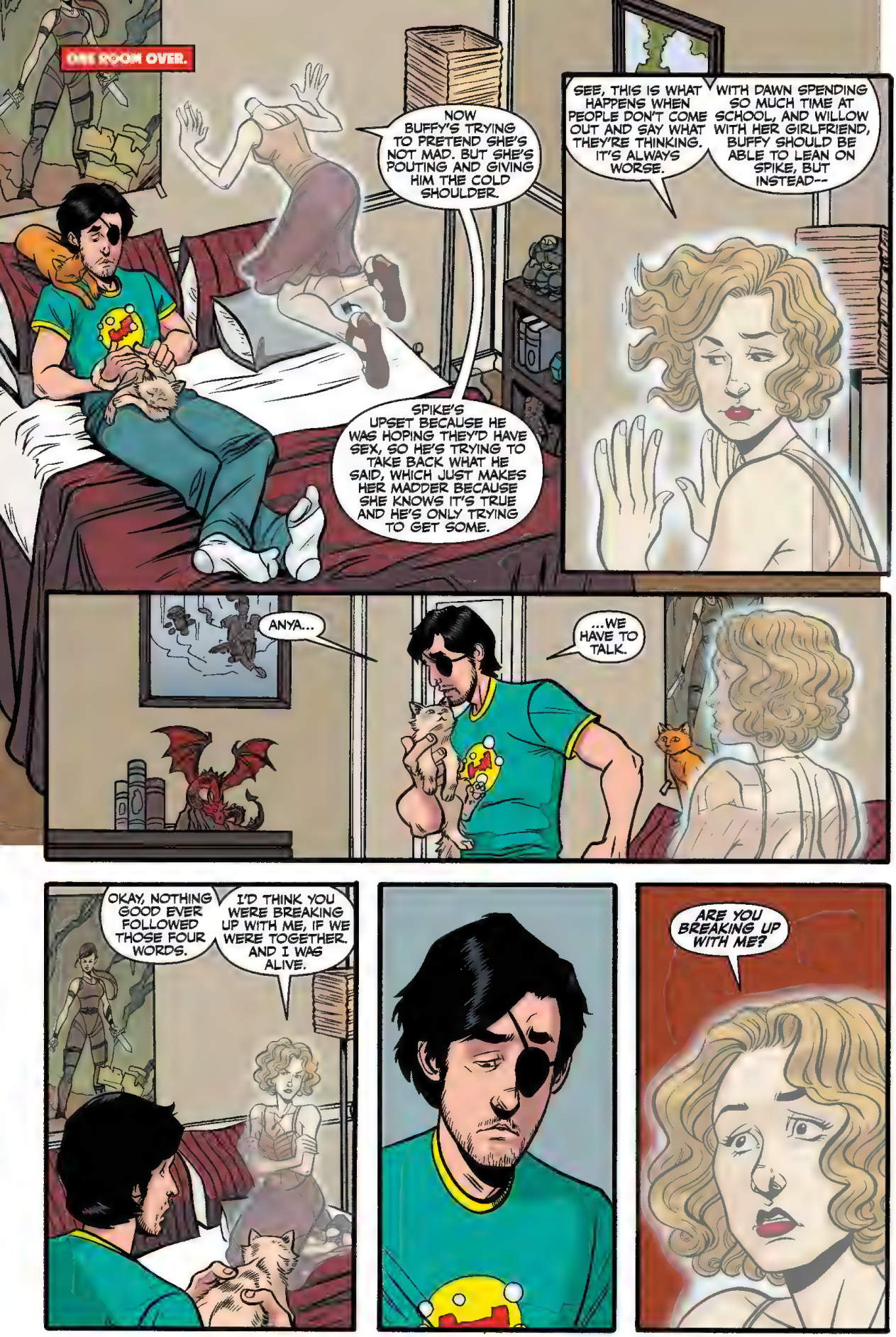

SPIKE AND XANDER'S APARTMENT.
I MEAN, IS HE RIGHT? AM I BEING SELFISH 'CAUSE THE IDEA OF UNDERAGE GILES AND SOME DARK CRYSTAL-LOOKING CHICK SUCKING FACE CREEPS ME OUT?
IT TOTALLY DOES CREEP ME OUT, F.Y.I.

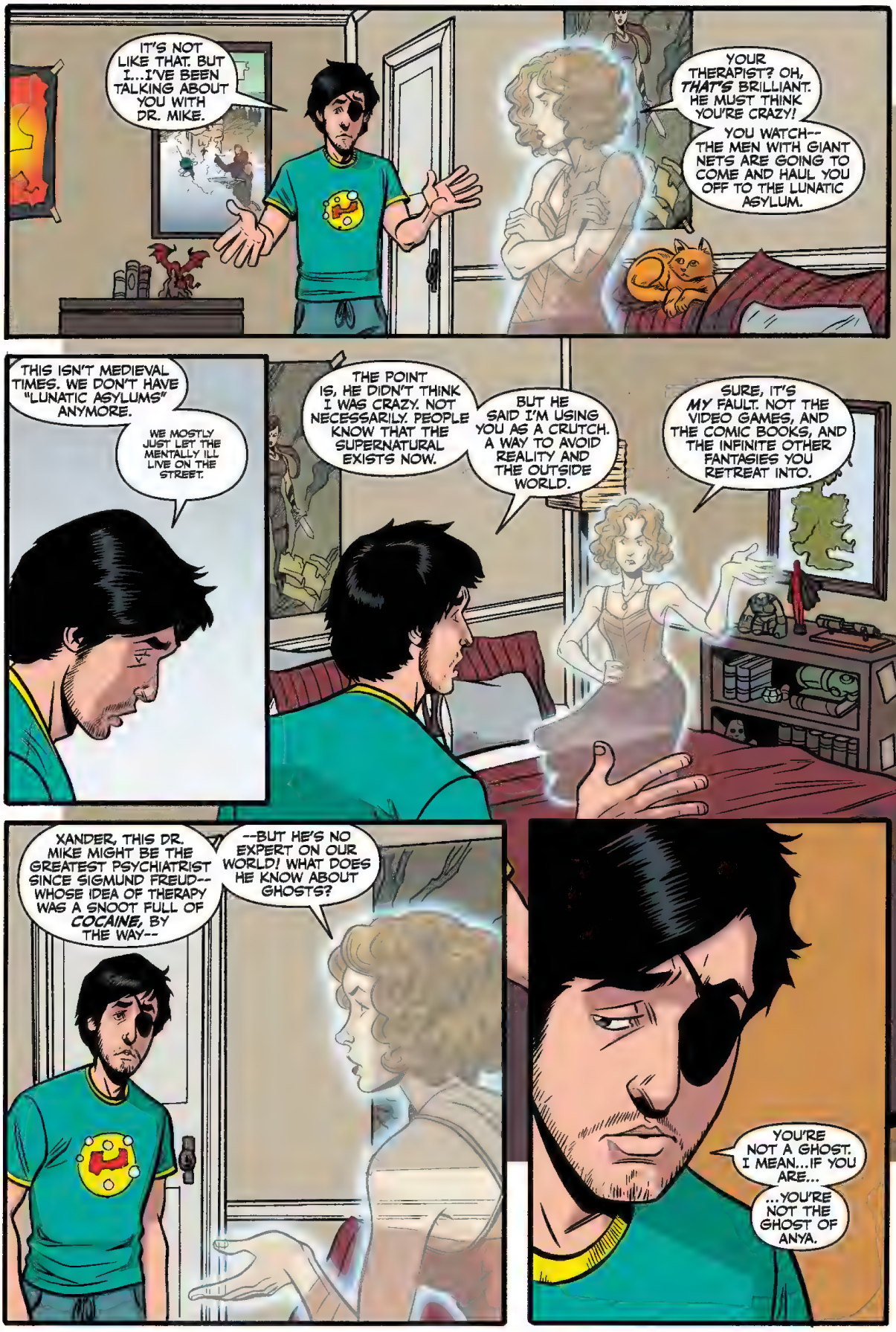
IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, THE FAE DON'T SNOG THE WAY WE DO. THEY CONNECT ON A SPIRITUAL LEVEL. LIKE A MIND MELD, FROM WHAT I GATHER.
LET'S NOT FORGET, WE DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE DOING. AND IF THEY ARE--FRANKLY, AIN'T REALLY OUR BUSINESS, IS IT?

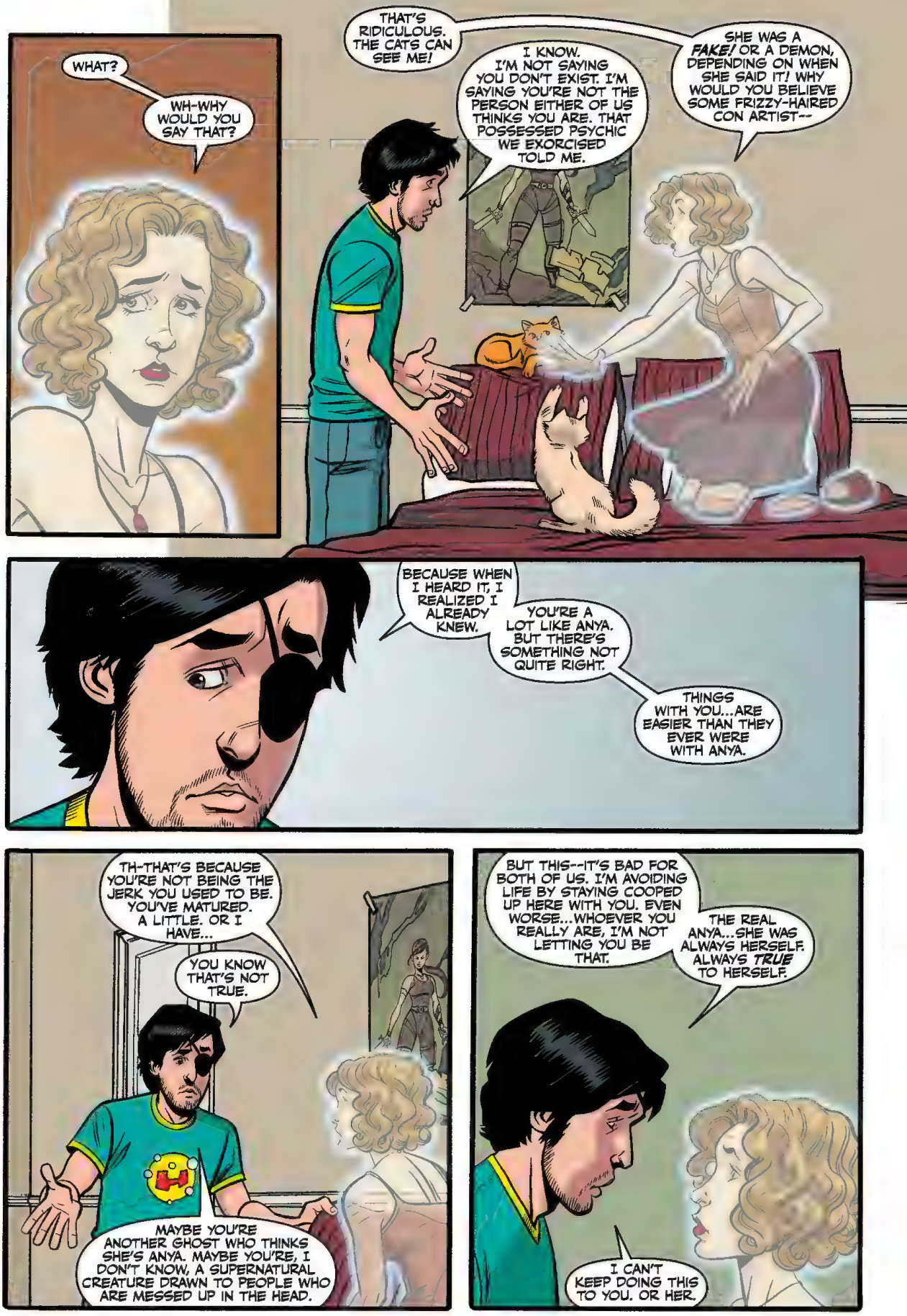

SO YOU THINK I'M BEING UNREASONABLE, TOO?
NOT IN YOUR DECISION MAKING. I'M WITH YOU ON NOT OPENING PORTALS WILLY-NILLY.


BUT I DO THINK YOU MAY BE TAKING THIS HARDER THAN YOU SHOULD. 'CAUSE THE BAND FINALLY GOT BACK TOGETHER, AFTER BEIN' SCATTERED SO LONG...
...AND NOW IT'S NOT SOME COSMIC EVIL TEARIN' US APART. IT'S LIFE.

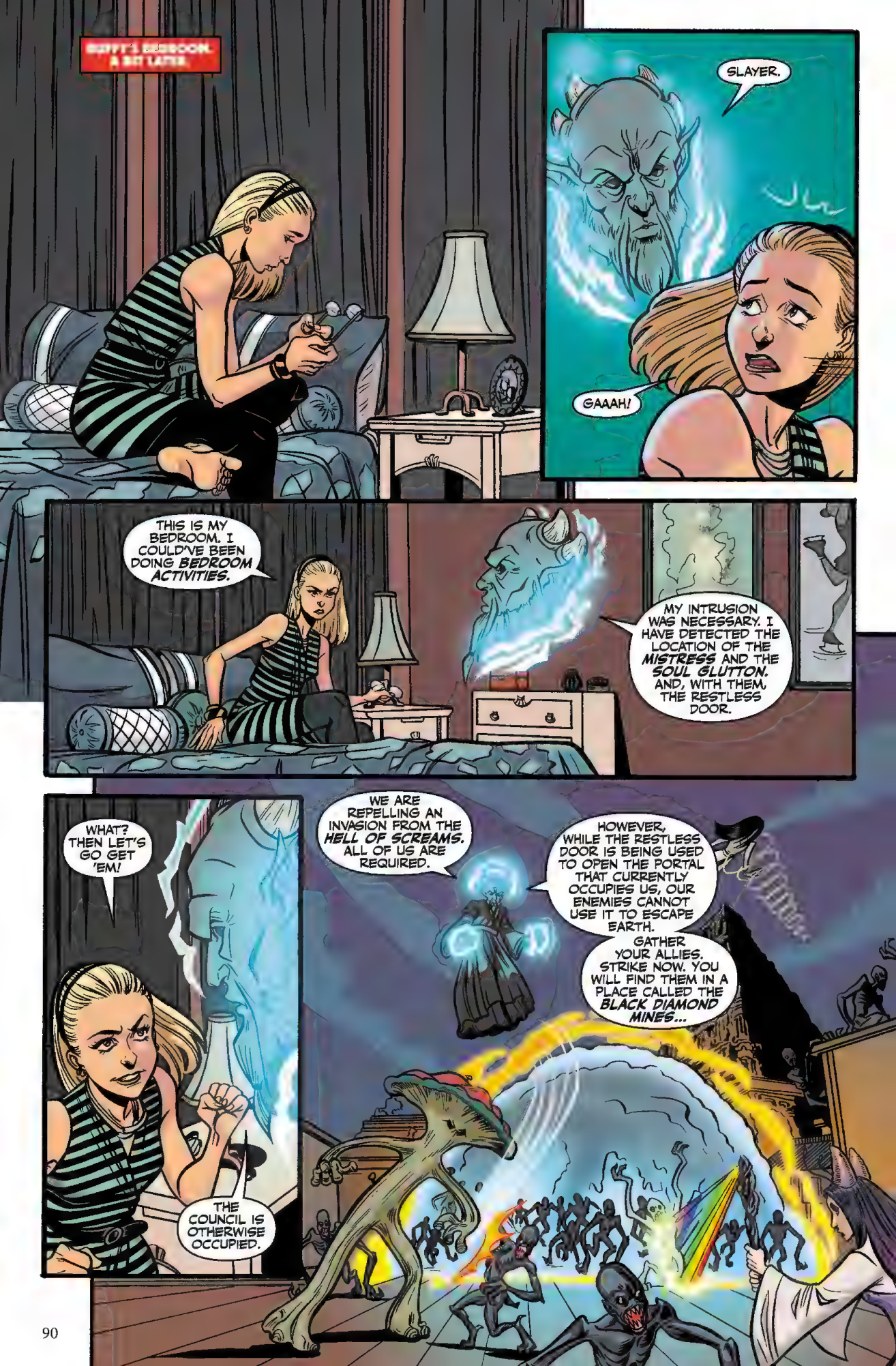

AND THERE AIN'T A BLESSED THING YOU CAN PUNCH TO STOP THAT HAPPENING.

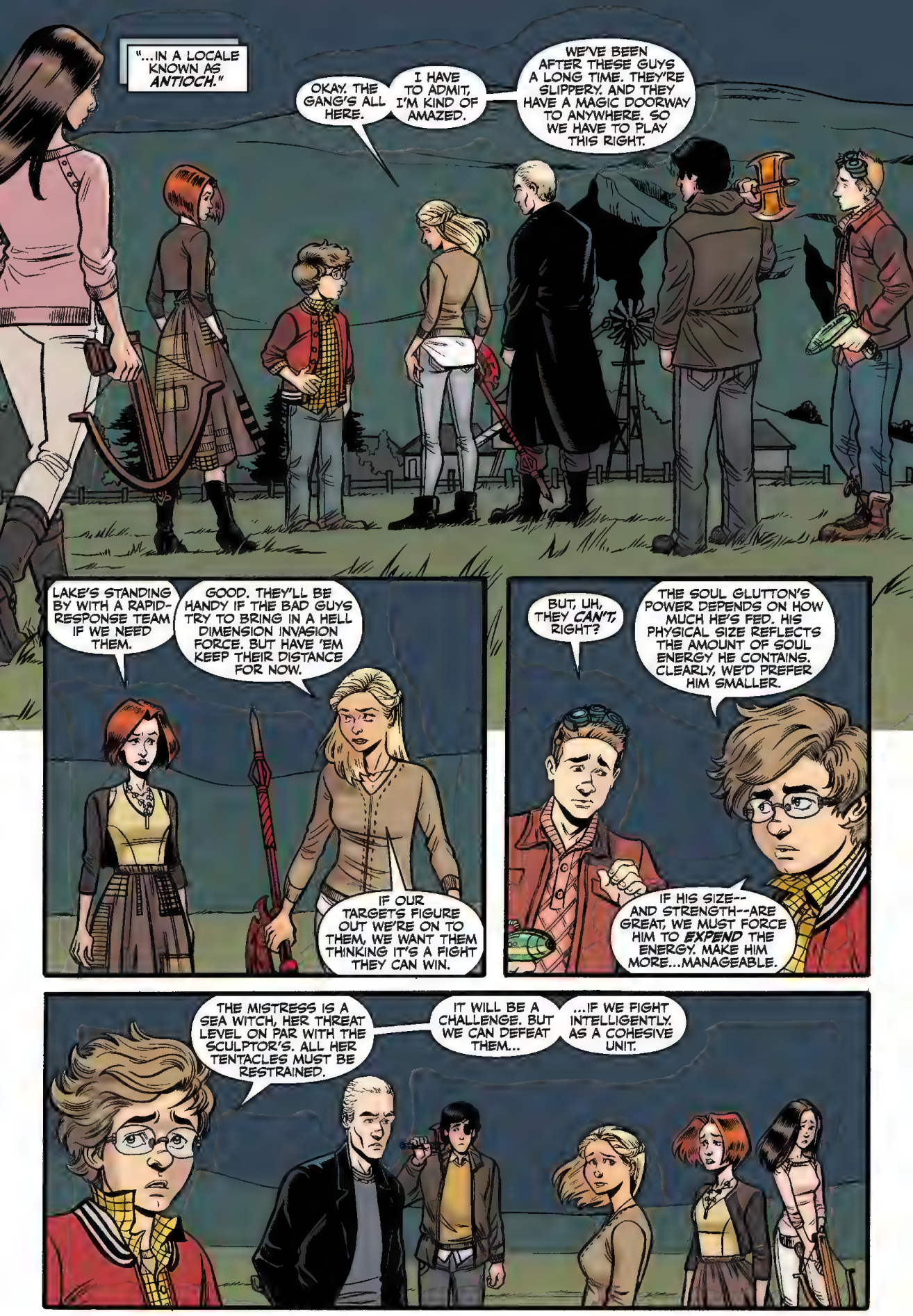

ONE ROOM OVER.
NOW BUFFY'S TRYING TO PRETEND SHE'S NOT MAD. BUT SHE'S POUTING AND GIVING HIM THE COLD SHOULDER.
SPIKE'S UPSET BECAUSE HE WAS HOPING THEY'D HAVE SEX, SO HE'S TRYING TO TAKE BACK WHAT HE SAID, WHICH JUST MAKES HER MADDER BECAUSE SHE KNOWS IT'S TRUE AND HE'S ONLY TRYING TO GET SOME.
SEE, THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE DON'T COME OUT AND SAY WHAT THEY'RE THINKING. IT'S ALWAYS WORSE.
WITH DAWN SPENDING SO MUCH TIME AT SCHOOL, AND WILLOW WITH HER GIRLFRIEND, BUFFY SHOULD BE ABLE TO LEAN ON SPIKE, BUT INSTEAD--
ANYA...
...WE HAVE TO TALK.
OKAY, NOTHING GOOD EVER FOLLOWED THOSE FOUR WORDS.
I'D THINK YOU WERE BREAKING UP WITH ME, IF WE WERE TOGETHER. AND I WAS ALIVE.
ARE YOU BREAKING UP WITH ME?

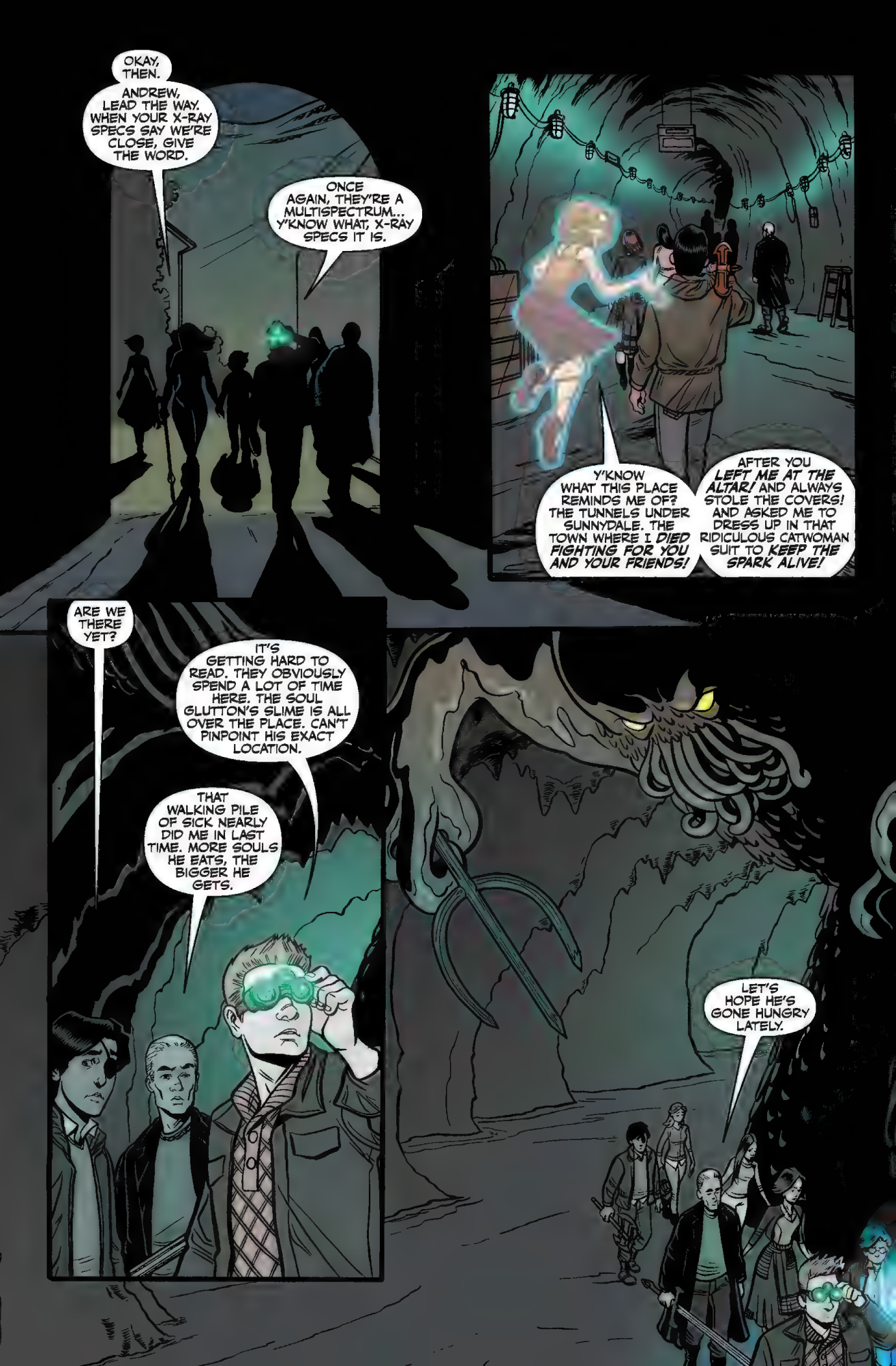

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. BUT I...I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT YOU WITH DR. MIKE.
YOUR THERAPIST? OH, THAT'S BRILLIANT. HE MUST THINK YOU'RE CRAZY!
YOU WATCH-- THE MEN WITH GIANT NETS ARE GOING TO COME AND HAUL YOU OFF TO THE LUNATIC ASYLUM.
THIS ISN'T MEDIEVAL TIMES. WE DON'T HAVE "LUNATIC ASYLUMS" ANYMORE.
WE MOSTLY JUST LET THE MENTALLY ILL LIVE ON THE STREET.
THE POINT IS, HE DIDN'T THINK I WAS CRAZY. NOT NECESSARILY. PEOPLE KNOW THAT THE SUPERNATURAL EXISTS NOW.
BUT HE SAID I'M USING YOU AS A CRUTCH. A WAY TO AVOID REALITY AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
SURE, IT'S MY FAULT. NOT THE VIDEO GAMES, AND THE COMIC BOOKS, AND THE INFINITE OTHER FANTASIES YOU RETREAT INTO.
XANDER, THIS DR. MIKE MIGHT BE THE GREATEST PSYCHIATRIST SINCE SIGMUND FREUD-- WHOSE IDEA OF THERAPY WAS A SNOOT FULL OF COCAINE, BY THE WAY--
--BUT HE'S NO EXPERT ON OUR WORLD! WHAT DOES HE KNOW ABOUT GHOSTS?
YOU'RE NOT A GHOST. I MEAN...IF YOU ARE...
...YOU'RE NOT THE GHOST OF ANYA.


WHAT?
WH-WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?
THAT'S RIDICULOUS. THE CATS CAN SEE ME!
I KNOW. I'M NOT SAYING YOU DON'T EXIST. I'M SAYING YOU'RE NOT THE PERSON EITHER OF US THINKS YOU ARE. THAT POSSESSED PSYCHIC WE EXORCISED TOLD ME.
SHE WAS A FAKE! OR A DEMON, DEPENDING ON WHEN SHE SAID IT! WHY WOULD YOU BELIEVE SOME FRIZZY-HAIRED CON ARTIST--
BECAUSE WHEN I HEARD IT, I REALIZED I ALREADY KNEW.
YOU'RE A LOT LIKE ANYA. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT.
THINGS WITH YOU...ARE EASIER THAN THEY EVER WERE WITH ANYA.
TH-THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT BEING THE JERK YOU USED TO BE. YOU'VE MATURED. A LITTLE. OR I HAVE...
YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE.
MAYBE YOU'RE ANOTHER GHOST WHO THINKS SHE'S ANYA. MAYBE YOU'RE, I DON'T KNOW, A SUPERNATURAL CREATURE DRAWN TO PEOPLE WHO ARE MESSED UP IN THE HEAD.
BUT THIS--IT'S BAD FOR BOTH OF US. I'M AVOIDING LIFE BY STAYING COOPED UP HERE WITH YOU. EVEN WORSE...WHOEVER YOU REALLY ARE, I'M NOT LETTING YOU BE THAT.
THE REAL ANYA...SHE WAS ALWAYS HERSELF. ALWAYS TRUE TO HERSELF.
I CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS TO YOU. OR HER.

WELL, THAT'S JUST GREAT FOR YOU! YOU CAN TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE, BUT NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE ME! I'M STUCK WITH YOU!
DR. MIKE SAID I SHOULD IGNORE YOU. LIKE YOU'RE NOT THERE. IF I'M NOT DEFINING YOU, IT'LL HELP YOU DISCOVER YOUR TRUE SELF. FIGURE OUT WHO OR WHAT YOU REALLY ARE.
AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO. I'M SORRY, AHN--
I'M SORRY.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! DON'T YOU THINK I'D HAVE DONE THAT ALREADY IF I COULD? YOU THINK YOU'RE SO FASCINATING I'M COMPELLED TO HOVER AROUND YOUR SAD, PATHETIC LIFE?
YOU THINK WHAT YOU WERE DOING WAS SELFISH? THIS! THIS IS THE SISTINE CHAPEL OF SELFISHNESS!
XANDER, YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!
I'M ALREADY SO--SO LONELY!
XANDER, PLEASE!!


BUFFY'S BEDROOM. A BIT LATER.
SLAYER.
GAAAH!
THIS IS MY BEDROOM. I COULD'VE BEEN DOING BEDROOM ACTIVITIES.
MY INTRUSION WAS NECESSARY. I HAVE DETECTED THE LOCATION OF THE MISTRESS AND THE SOUL GLUTTON. AND, WITH THEM, THE RESTLESS DOOR.
WHAT? THEN LET'S GO GET 'EM!
THE COUNCIL IS OTHERWISE OCCUPIED.
WE ARE REPELLING AN INVASION FROM THE HELL OF SCREAMS. ALL OF US ARE REQUIRED.
HOWEVER, WHILE THE RESTLESS DOOR IS BEING USED TO OPEN THE PORTAL THAT CURRENTLY OCCUPIES US, OUR ENEMIES CANNOT USE IT TO ESCAPE EARTH.
GATHER YOUR ALLIES. STRIKE NOW. YOU WILL FIND THEM IN A PLACE CALLED THE BLACK DIAMOND MINES...


"...IN A LOCALE KNOWN AS *ANTIOCH.*"
OKAY. THE GANG'S ALL HERE.
I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'M KIND OF AMAZED.
WE'VE BEEN AFTER THESE GUYS A LONG TIME. THEY'RE SLIPPERY. AND THEY HAVE A MAGIC DOORWAY TO ANYWHERE. SO WE HAVE TO PLAY THIS RIGHT.
LAKE'S STANDING BY WITH A RAPID-RESPONSE TEAM IF WE NEED THEM.
GOOD. THEY'LL BE HANDY IF THE BAD GUYS TRY TO BRING IN A HELL DIMENSION INVASION FORCE. BUT HAVE 'EM KEEP THEIR DISTANCE FOR NOW.
IF OUR TARGETS FIGURE OUT WE'RE ON TO THEM, WE WANT THEM THINKING IT'S A FIGHT THEY CAN WIN.
BUT, UH, THEY *CAN'T,* RIGHT?
THE SOUL GLUTTON'S POWER DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH HE'S FED. HIS PHYSICAL SIZE REFLECTS THE AMOUNT OF SOUL ENERGY HE CONTAINS. CLEARLY, WE'D PREFER HIM SMALLER.
IF HIS SIZE--AND STRENGTH--ARE GREAT, WE MUST FORCE HIM TO ***EXPEND*** THE ENERGY. MAKE HIM MORE...MANAGEABLE.
THE MISTRESS IS A SEA WITCH, HER THREAT LEVEL ON PAR WITH THE SCULPTOR'S. ALL HER TENTACLES MUST BE RESTRAINED.
IT WILL BE A CHALLENGE. BUT WE CAN DEFEAT THEM...
...IF WE FIGHT INTELLIGENTLY. AS A COHESIVE UNIT.

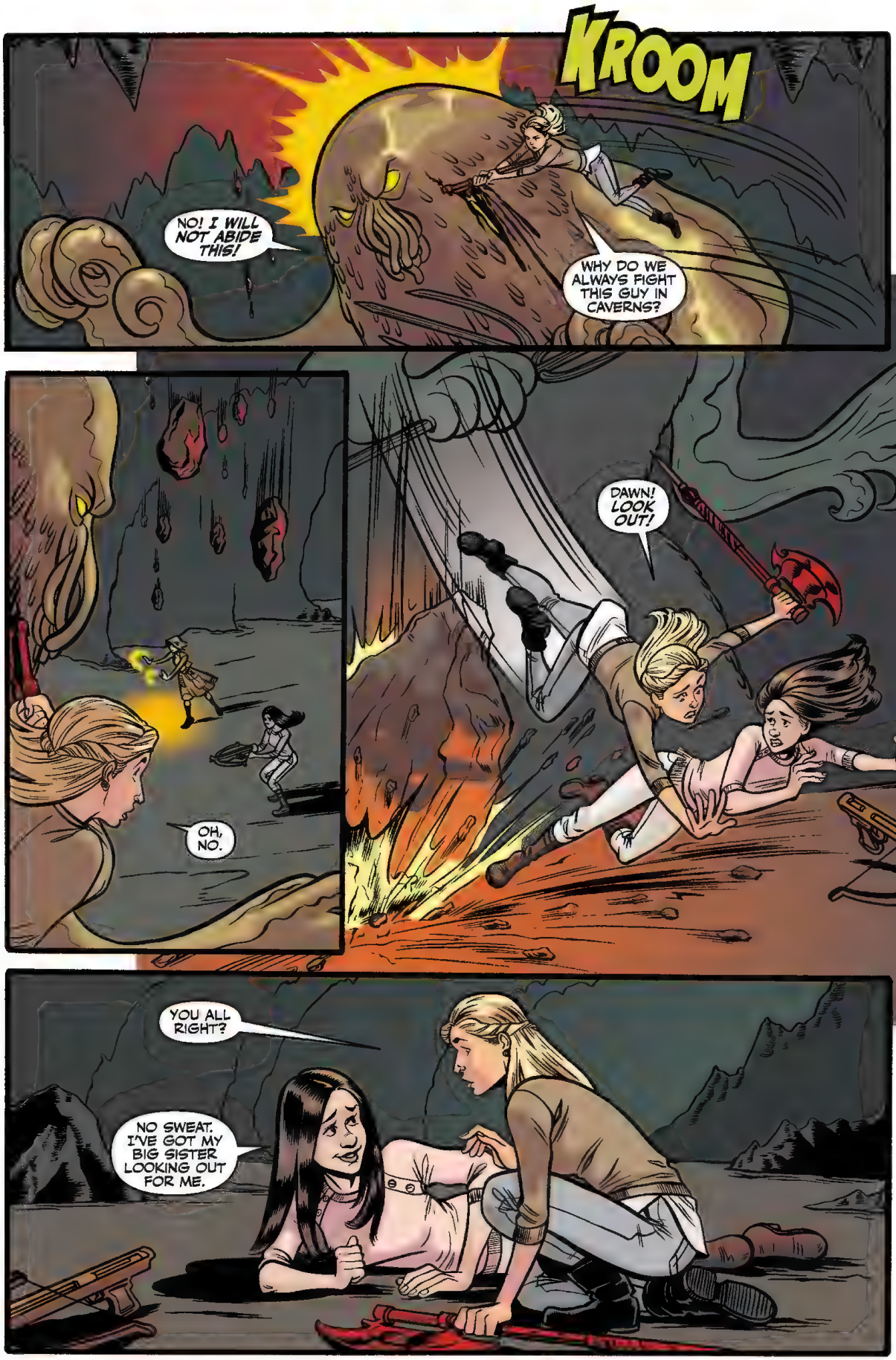

OKAY, THEN.
ANDREW, LEAD THE WAY. WHEN YOUR X-RAY SPECS SAY WE'RE CLOSE, GIVE THE WORD.
ONCE AGAIN, THEY'RE A MULTISPECTRUM... Y'KNOW WHAT, X-RAY SPECS IT IS.
Y'KNOW WHAT THIS PLACE REMINDS ME OF? THE TUNNELS UNDER SUNNYDALE. THE TOWN WHERE I *DIED FIGHTING FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS!*
AFTER YOU *LEFT ME AT THE ALTAR!* AND ALWAYS STOLE THE COVERS! AND ASKED ME TO DRESS UP IN THAT RIDICULOUS CATWOMAN SUIT TO *KEEP THE SPARK ALIVE!*
ARE WE THERE YET?
IT'S GETTING HARD TO READ. THEY OBVIOUSLY SPEND A LOT OF TIME HERE. THE SOUL GLUTTON'S SLIME IS ALL OVER THE PLACE. CAN'T PINPOINT HIS EXACT LOCATION.
THAT WALKING PILE OF SICK NEARLY DID ME IN LAST TIME. MORE SOULS HE EATS, THE BIGGER HE GETS.
LET'S HOPE HE'S GONE HUNGRY LATELY.

SHHKNGG
LOOK OUT!
I AM ALWAYS HUNGRY.
YET NEVER SATED.
KFASH
HGGH!
GILES! HIS HEAD'S HIS VULNERABLE SPOT, RIGHT? LEVITATE ME!
YES, OF COURSE--
WELL, AREN'T YOU ADORABLE.

I COULD JUST EAT YOU UP.
GILES!
OOH, THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY! COME TO MAMA, BOYS.
WE GOT HER. NEED YOUR SCYTHE AGAINST THE BIG FELLA.
WILLOW! CAN YOU RAISE ME UP?
LITTLE BUSY HERE!
AND YOU WILL SOON BE MORE SO. WE SENSED YOU COMING, MORTALS...

...AND PREPARED A WELCOME.
THE RESTLESS DOOR! THEY'VE OPENED A PORTAL!
GAH! I HATE FORCE FIELDS!
WAIT! THEY'VE ONLY EVER OPENED ONE PORTAL AT A TIME, RIGHT? SO OBVIOUSLY THE RESTLESS DOOR CAN'T MULTITASK.
IF *THIS* ONE'S OPEN NOW, THE PORTAL D'HOFFRYN AND THE COUNCIL WERE DEALING WITH WOULD'VE CLOSED! THE CAVALRY'S COMING!
OH, THE DEMONS OF THE SCREAMING HELL WILL KEEP THEM OCCUPIED A FEW MOMENTS MORE.
AND I'VE CAST SPELLS PREVENTING ANYONE FROM TELEPORTING DIRECTLY INTO THESE CAVES.
BY THE TIME YOUR ALLIES ARRIVE, WE'LL BE GONE...AS WILL YOU.
I COULD USE SOME HELP HERE, SPIKE!
YOU? I BLOODY WELL THINK I'VE GOT THE WORST OF IT!

ENOUGH. WE NEED TO END THIS. BEFORE THE DENIZENS OF THIS FRESH HELL FIND THEIR WAY OUT.
BUFFY! I CAN SEND YOU UPWARD. STAYING THERE IS DOWN TO YOU.
NO SWEAT.
I BROUGHT MY CLIMBING GEAR.
MRAAA!
AS FOR YOU TWO, HER SUBSONIC SONG IS CLOUDING YOUR MIND. SEE IF THIS HELPS.
IT'S A START.
HERE'S THE FINISH.
SHNK
AIIEEF!


KROOM
NO! I WILL NOT ABIDE THIS!
WHY DO WE ALWAYS FIGHT THIS GUY IN CAVERNS?
DAWN! LOOK OUT!
OH, NO.
YOU ALL RIGHT?
NO SWEAT. I'VE GOT MY BIG SISTER LOOKING OUT FOR ME.

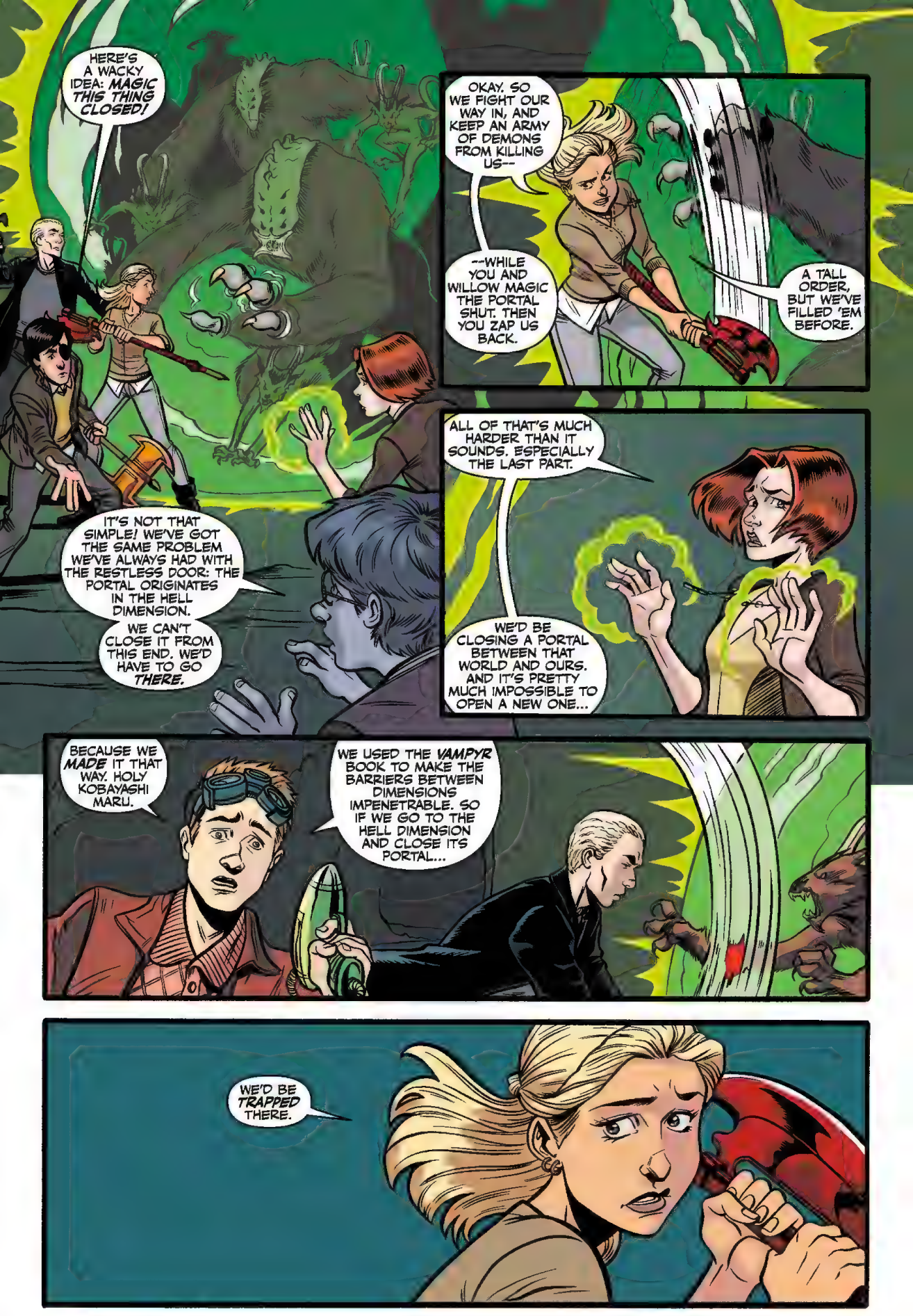
"SISTER." THE CHILD IS YOUR KIN!
VZAKK
NNAHH!
YOU HAVE FAMILY.
DAWN, WATCH-- GUH!
WHBAMM
A SLAYER MURDERED MY FAMILY. BUT AT LAST--AT LAST--I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE.
WATCH, SLAYER. WATCH AND WEEP..
...AS I DEVOUR THE SOUL OF YOUR SISTER!
AIIEEGHH!

NO!!
YES, SLAYER.
YES... WAIT.
WHAT IS... HAPPENING TO...
GRGAAA!

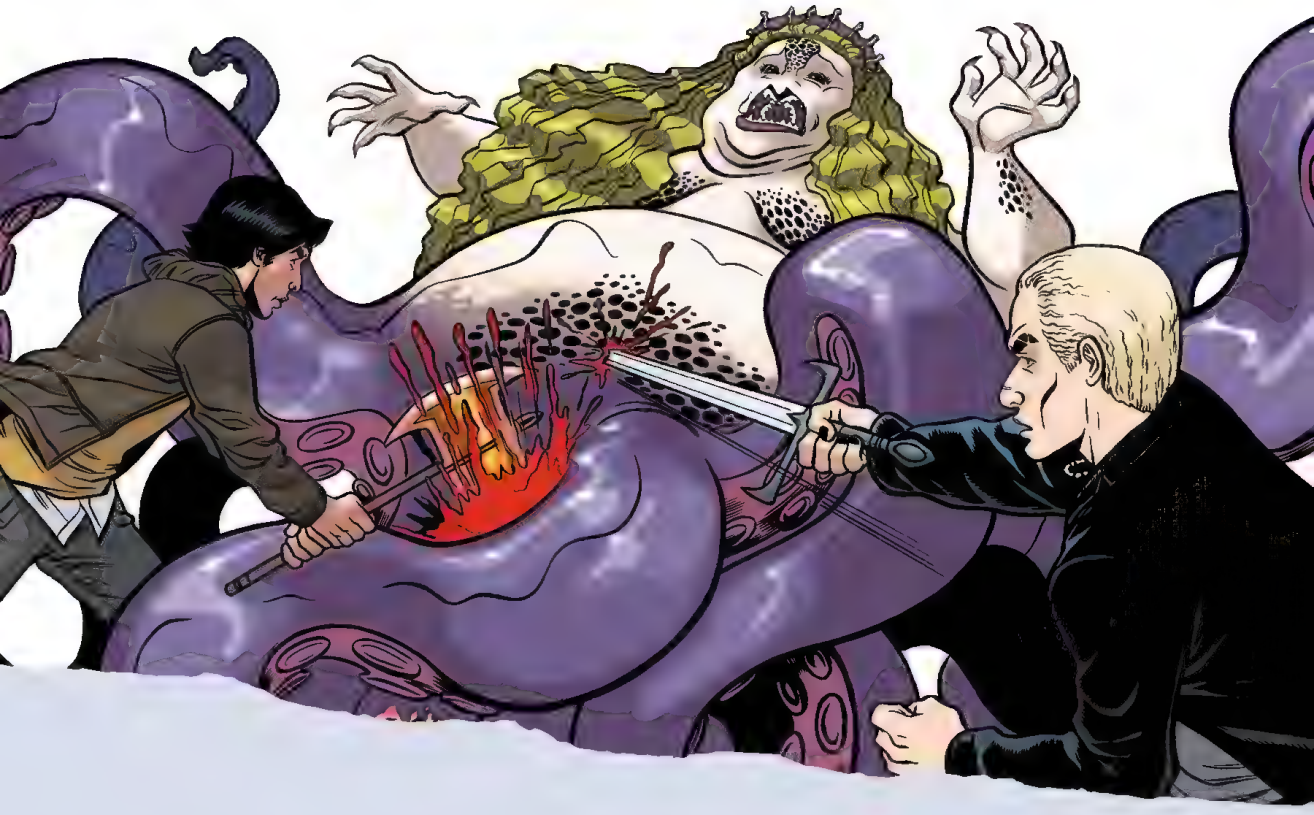
A...MOST CUNNING TRAP. THE GIRL IS NOT A TRUE CHILD, BUT THE FABLED KEY, INCARNATED IN HUMAN FORM.
HER SOUL IS UNIQUE. POWERFUL. DEADLY. LIKE POISON. STILL, YOU COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CERTAIN SHE'D SURVIVE.
USING YOUR SISTER AS BAIT...I COMMEND YOUR RUTHLESSNESS, SLAYER.
DID YOU REALLY--?
OF COURSE NOT. LUCKY ACCIDENT. BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO COMPLAIN. I LIKE HIM BETTER FUN SIZE.
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DIED BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOUR PORTALS.
IT'S OVER. YOU'RE OVER.
HOW RUDE.
IF YOU THINK THIS'LL HOLD US FOR MORE THAN A SECOND...
LONG ENOUGH.

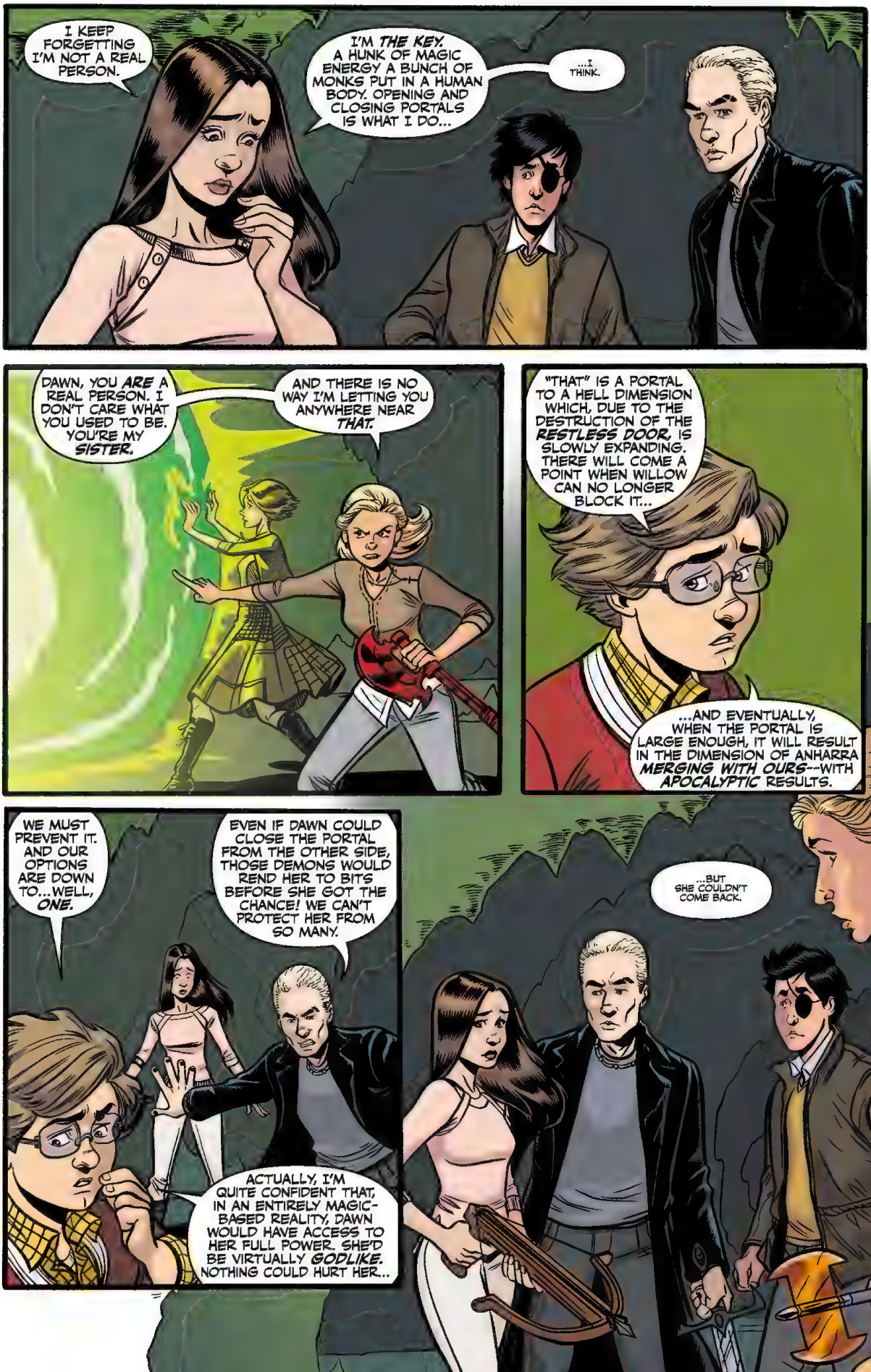
WE CANNOT WIN THIS BATTLE, NOR ESCAPE WITH THE RESTLESS DOOR. EVEN IF WE FLEE THROUGH IT, OUR TRAIL WILL BE FRESH ENOUGH FOR THE COUNCIL TO FOLLOW.
SO I DECREE THAT IF WE CAN'T HAVE IT, NO ONE CAN. WHAT SAY YOU, SOUL GLUTTON?
AGREED, MY LADY.
WE PLACED THE MYSTIC PROTECTIONS UPON THE DOOR. IT IS THEREFORE A SIMPLE MATTER TO REMOVE THEM...
...AND DESTROY IT.
CHAASH
HOW VERY FIRST GRADE OF YOU.
BUT HEY, THANKS FOR SOLVING OUR PROBLEM.
I WISH IT WERE THAT SIMPLE. THE RESTLESS DOOR MAY BE IRREVOCABLY SHATTERED...
...BUT THE PORTAL REMAINS!

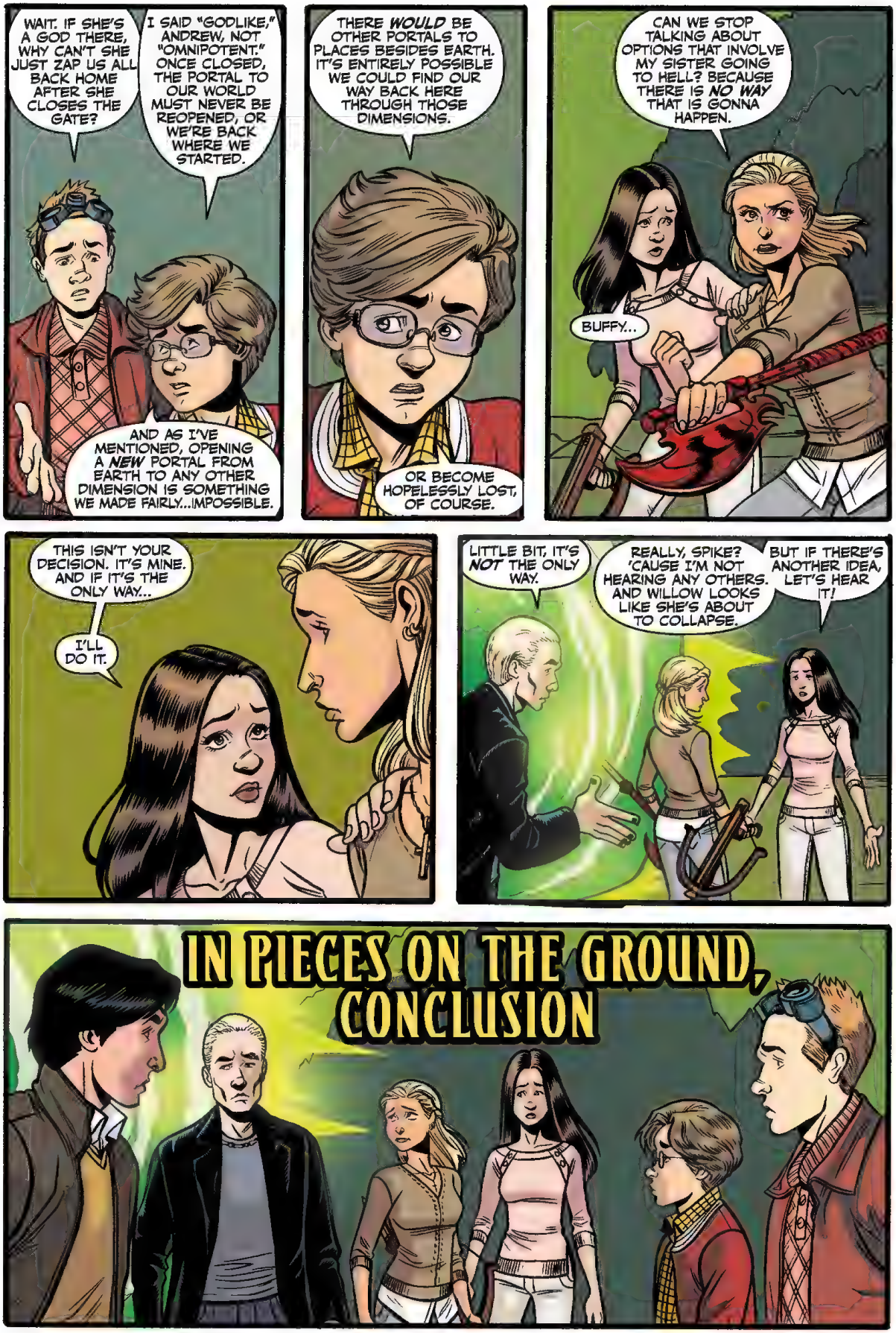
AND THE CREATURES ON THE OTHER SIDE SEEM INTENT UPON USING IT!
G-GOT A FORCE FIELD UP...BUT THE PORTAL'S EXPANDING!
AND IN THE ABSENCE OF THE RESTLESS DOOR, IT WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, UNTIL THAT WORLD AND THIS ARE JOINED.
QUITE A QUANDARY FOR YOU, HMM?
I BELIEVE WE'LL BE GOING. THE ANHARRANS ARE NOTORIOUSLY AND IRRATIONALLY BLOOD-THIRSTY, KNOWN FOR FEASTING ON THE STILL-LIVING FLESH OF ALL THEY ENCOUNTER.
GOOD LUCK WITH ALL THAT, DEARIES.


HERE'S A WACKY IDEA: MAGIC THIS THING CLOSED!
OKAY. SO WE FIGHT OUR WAY IN, AND KEEP AN ARMY OF DEMONS FROM KILLING US--
--WHILE YOU AND WILLOW MAGIC THE PORTAL SHUT. THEN YOU ZAP US BACK.
A TALL ORDER, BUT WE'VE FILLED 'EM BEFORE.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE! WE'VE GOT THE SAME PROBLEM WE'VE ALWAYS HAD WITH THE RESTLESS DOOR: THE PORTAL ORIGINATES IN THE HELL DIMENSION.
WE CAN'T CLOSE IT FROM THIS END. WE'D HAVE TO GO THERE.
ALL OF THAT'S MUCH HARDER THAN IT SOUNDS. ESPECIALLY THE LAST PART.
WE'D BE CLOSING A PORTAL BETWEEN THAT WORLD AND OURS. AND IT'S PRETTY MUCH IMPOSSIBLE TO OPEN A NEW ONE...
BECAUSE WE MADE IT THAT WAY. HOLY KOBAYASHI MARU.
WE USED THE VAMPYR BOOK TO MAKE THE BARRIERS BETWEEN DIMENSIONS IMPENETRABLE. SO IF WE GO TO THE HELL DIMENSION AND CLOSE ITS PORTAL...
WE'D BE TRAPPED THERE.

AND THAT'S IF WE COULD EVEN DETERMINE HOW TO SEAL IT.
IT'S NOT AS IF THERE'S A--
--KEY.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.
NO.
HELL NO.
UM... WHY'S EVERYBODY LOOKING AT ME?




I KEEP FORGETTING I'M NOT A REAL PERSON.
I'M THE KEY. A HUNK OF MAGIC ENERGY A BUNCH OF MONKS PUT IN A HUMAN BODY. OPENING AND CLOSING PORTALS IS WHAT I DO...
...I THINK.
DAWN, YOU ARE A REAL PERSON. I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU USED TO BE. YOU'RE MY SISTER.
AND THERE IS NO WAY I'M LETTING YOU ANYWHERE NEAR THAT.
"THAT" IS A PORTAL TO A HELL DIMENSION WHICH, DUE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RESTLESS DOOR, IS SLOWLY EXPANDING. THERE WILL COME A POINT WHEN WILLOW CAN NO LONGER BLOCK IT...
...AND EVENTUALLY, WHEN THE PORTAL IS LARGE ENOUGH, IT WILL RESULT IN THE DIMENSION OF ANHARRA MERGING WITH OURS--WITH APOCALYPTIC RESULTS.
WE MUST PREVENT IT. AND OUR OPTIONS ARE DOWN TO...WELL, ONE.
EVEN IF DAWN COULD CLOSE THE PORTAL FROM THE OTHER SIDE, THOSE DEMONS WOULD REND HER TO BITS BEFORE SHE GOT THE CHANCE! WE CAN'T PROTECT HER FROM SO MANY.
ACTUALLY, I'M QUITE CONFIDENT THAT, IN AN ENTIRELY MAGIC-BASED REALITY, DAWN WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO HER FULL POWER. SHE'D BE VIRTUALLY GODLIKE. NOTHING COULD HURT HER...
...BUT SHE COULDN'T COME BACK.


WAIT. IF SHE'S A GOD THERE, WHY CAN'T SHE JUST ZAP US ALL BACK HOME AFTER SHE CLOSES THE GATE?
I SAID "GODLIKE," ANDREW, NOT "OMNIPOTENT." ONCE CLOSED, THE PORTAL TO OUR WORLD MUST NEVER BE REOPENED, OR WE'RE BACK WHERE WE STARTED.
AND AS I'VE MENTIONED, OPENING A NEW PORTAL FROM EARTH TO ANY OTHER DIMENSION IS SOMETHING WE MADE FAIRLY...IMPOSSIBLE.
THERE WOULD BE OTHER PORTALS TO PLACES BESIDES EARTH. IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE WE COULD FIND OUR WAY BACK HERE THROUGH THOSE DIMENSIONS.
OR BECOME HOPELESSLY LOST, OF COURSE.
CAN WE STOP TALKING ABOUT OPTIONS THAT INVOLVE MY SISTER GOING TO HELL? BECAUSE THERE IS NO WAY THAT IS GONNA HAPPEN.
BUFFY...
THIS ISN'T YOUR DECISION. IT'S MINE. AND IF IT'S THE ONLY WAY...
I'LL DO IT.
LITTLE BIT, IT'S NOT THE ONLY WAY.
REALLY, SPIKE? 'CAUSE I'M NOT HEARING ANY OTHERS. AND WILLOW LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ABOUT TO COLLAPSE.
BUT IF THERE'S ANOTHER IDEA, LET'S HEAR IT!
IN PIECES ON THE GROUND, CONCLUSION

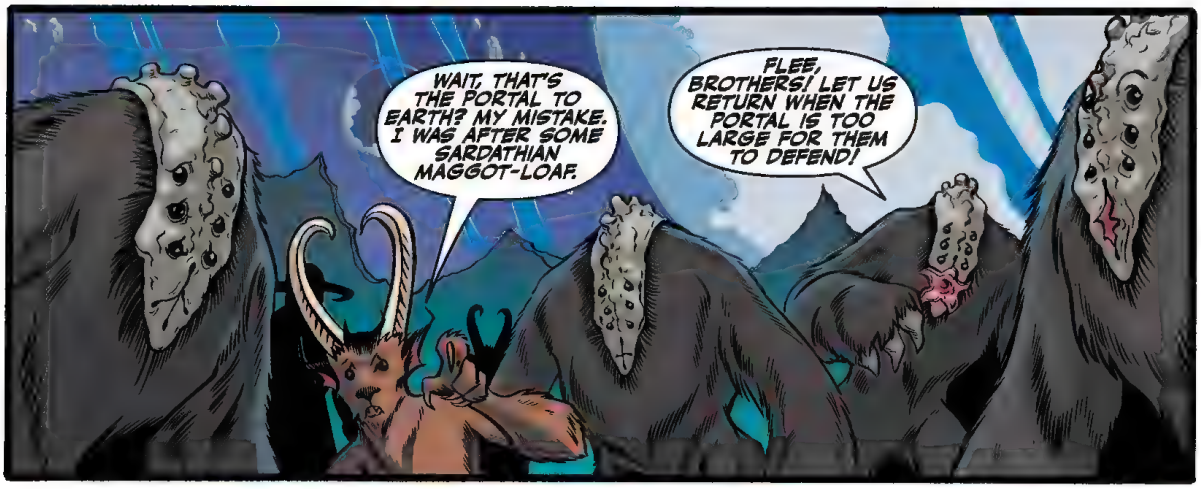
THIS IS STUPID. IT'S ALL *IFS* AND *MAYBES*. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW FOR SURE DAWN COULD DO ALL THIS GOD STUFF.
WE MIGHT HAVE TO FIND OUT...
...AND SOON.
I-I CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.
OKAY. IT JUST SO HAPPENS I'M *REALLY* IN THE MOOD TO VENT SOME ANGER.
WILLOW, PUSH 'EM BACK AS FAR AS YOU CAN ON THREE. ONE... TWO...
...THREE!
HNNGGHH!

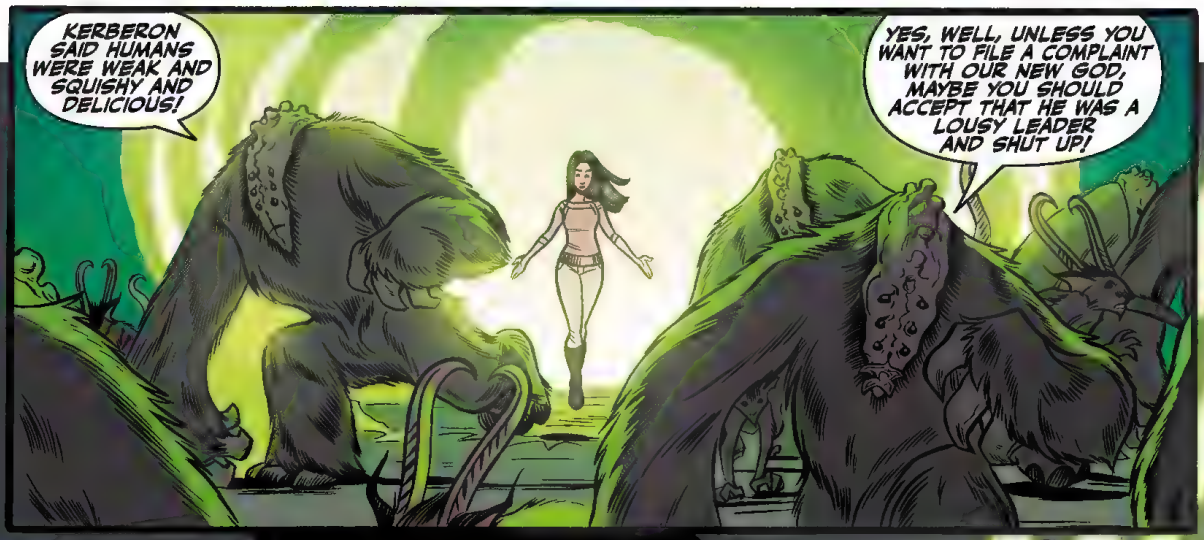
HAH! YOU LOT AIN'T SO TOUGH. IS THIS ALL YOU'VE GOT?
NO, BLOOD-SUCKER.
WE HAVE MUCH, MUCH MORE.
I HAVE TO PEE.

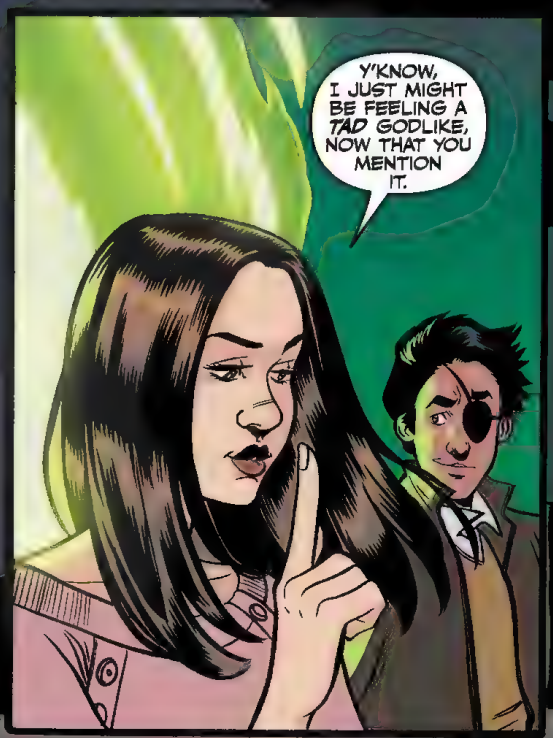
HOW YOU FEELING, DAWN? GODLIKE, MAYBE?
JUST KIND OF THE SAME. I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW THIS KEY-NESS IS SUPPOSED TO WORK!
YOU HEARD HER! BACK THROUGH THE PORTAL! WE BLOCK IT AGAIN, AND--
NO!
I AM KERBERON, GOD-KING OF THIS PLANE. AND YOU, MORTALS...
...YOU ARE STAINS ON MY HEEL, TO BE WASHED OFF BY THE BLOOD OF YOUR PEOPLE, AFTER I CLAIM YOUR DIMENSION AS MINE.

I'M NOT EVEN SCRATCHING HIM!
IT'S HOPELESS! RETREAT!
HOLD ON.
I THINK MY YOGA CLASS BREATHING DID THE TRICK.
THIS POWER ISN'T PART OF ME... IT'S ALL OF ME.
GRRAAAGH!

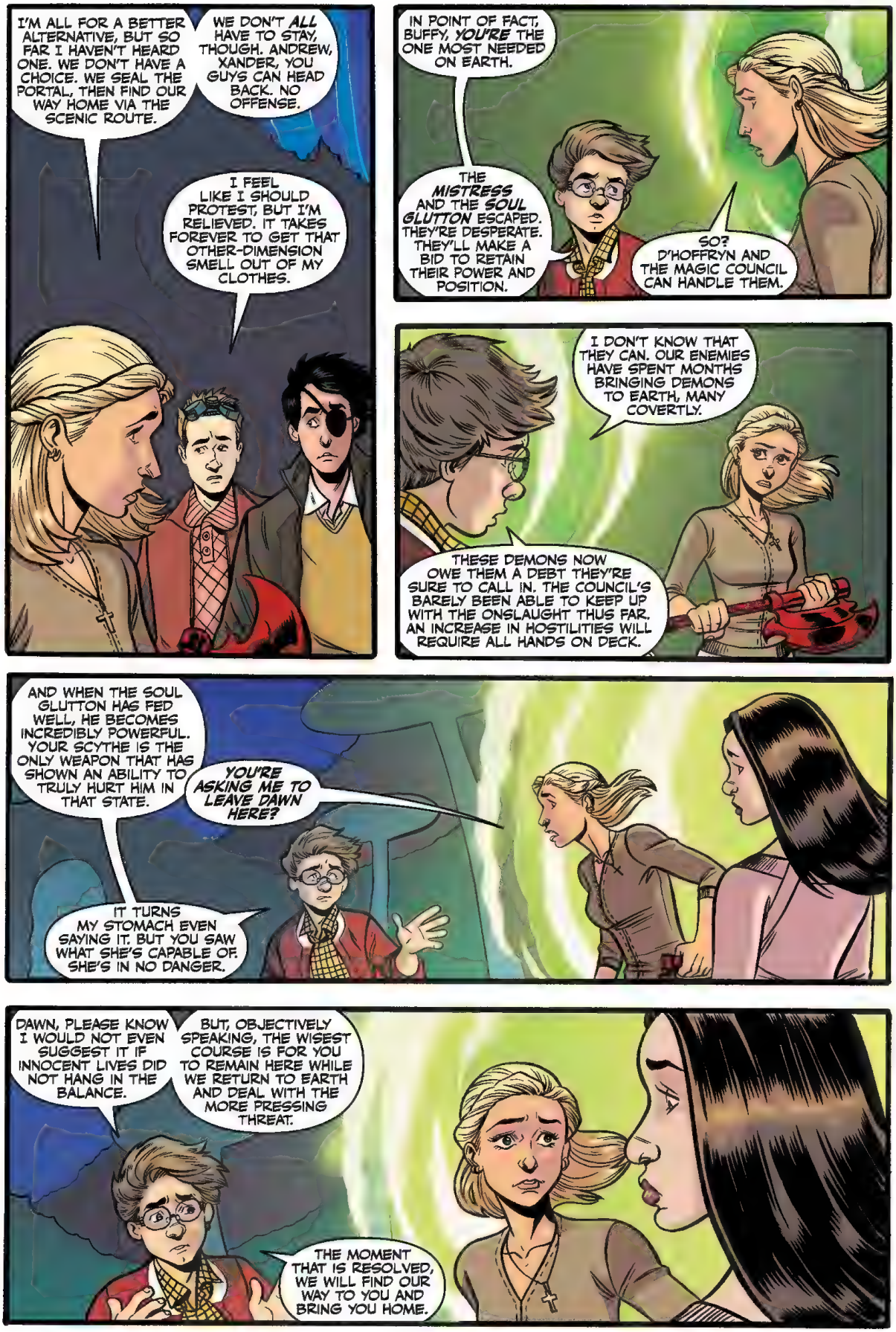
SHAKAZATTT

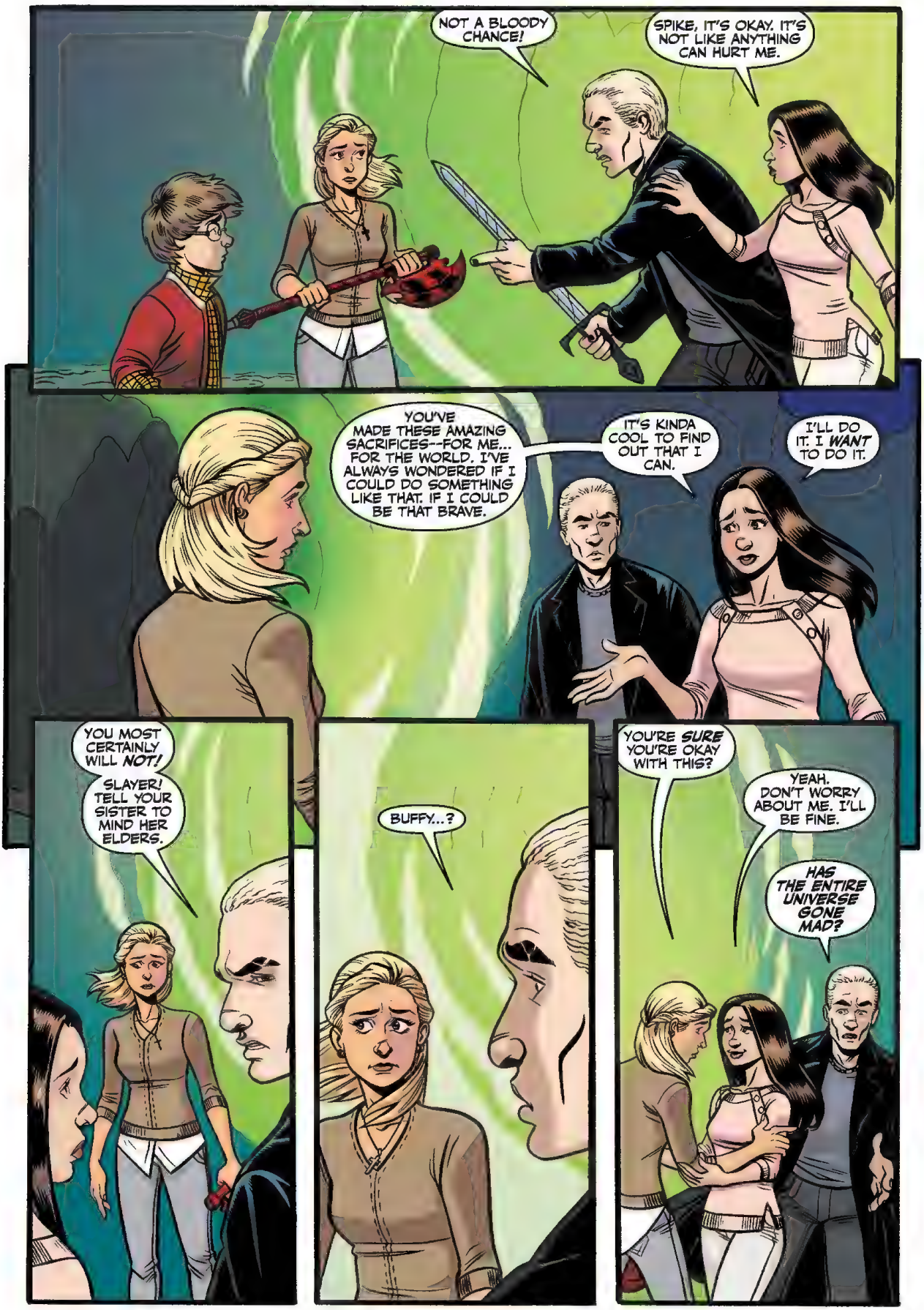

WAIT, THAT'S THE PORTAL TO EARTH? MY MISTAKE. I WAS AFTER SOME SARDATHIAN MAGGOT-LOAF.
FLEE, BROTHERS! LET US RETURN WHEN THE PORTAL IS TOO LARGE FOR THEM TO DEFEND!


KERBERON SAID HUMANS WERE WEAK AND SQUISHY AND DELICIOUS!
YES, WELL, UNLESS YOU WANT TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH OUR NEW GOD, MAYBE YOU SHOULD ACCEPT THAT HE WAS A LOUSY LEADER AND SHUT UP!


Y'KNOW, I JUST MIGHT BE FEELING A *TAD* GODLIKE, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT.

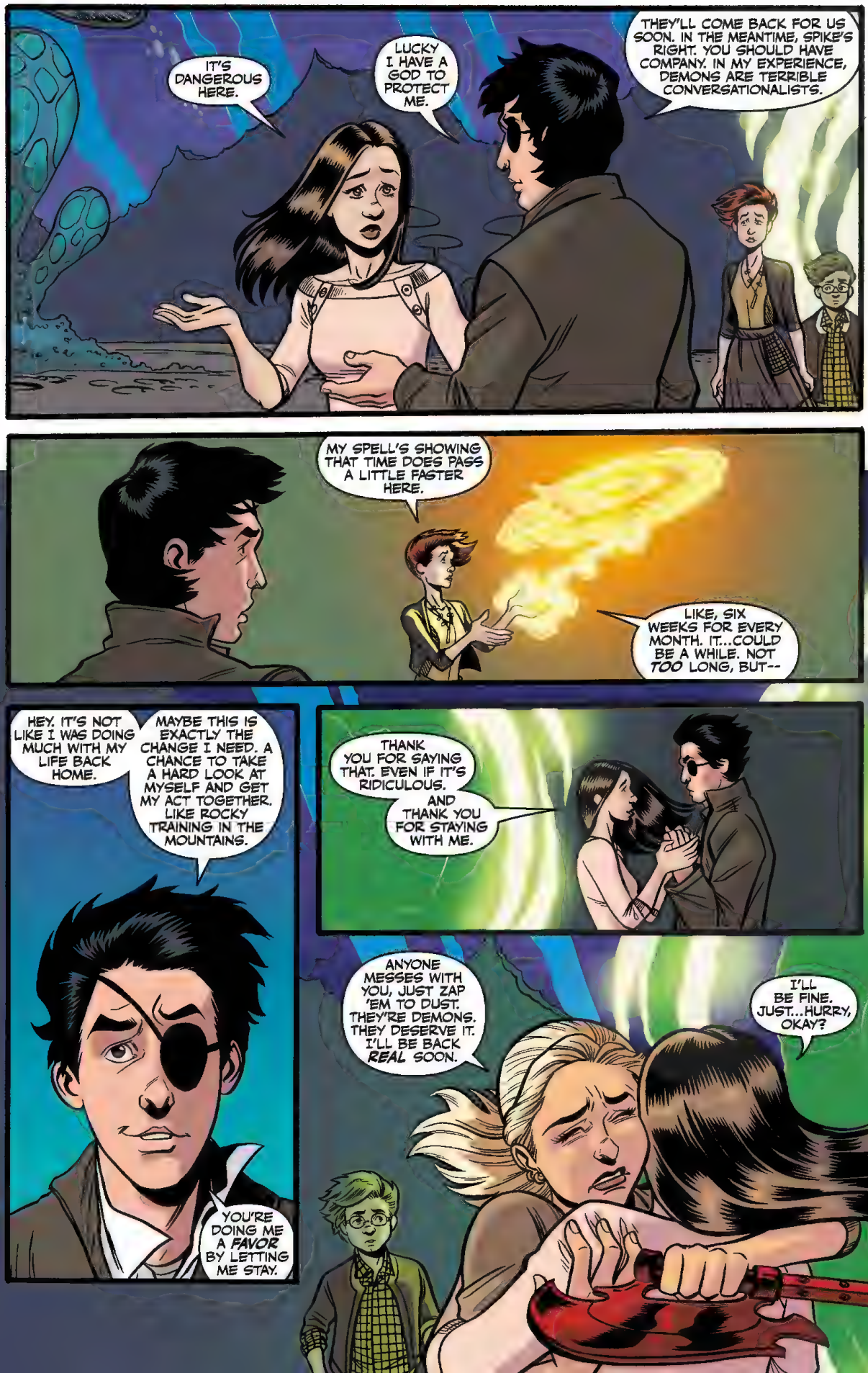
THAT STILL DOESN'T SOLVE OUR PROBLEM, UNFORTUNATELY. WE HAVE TO SEAL THE PORTAL TO STOP THIS WORLD MERGING WITH OURS...AND ONCE WE DO, IT'S A LONG WAY HOME.
SPEAKING AS A VETERAN OF DIMENSIONAL WALKABOUTS, I CAN TELL YOU THEY'RE COMPLICATED. IT'S EASY TO GET LOST, AND EVERY NEW PLACE HAS ITS OWN RULES.


I'M ALL FOR A BETTER ALTERNATIVE, BUT SO FAR I HAVEN'T HEARD ONE. WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. WE SEAL THE PORTAL, THEN FIND OUR WAY HOME VIA THE SCENIC ROUTE.
WE DON'T ALL HAVE TO STAY, THOUGH. ANDREW, XANDER, YOU GUYS CAN HEAD BACK. NO OFFENSE.
I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD PROTEST, BUT I'M RELIEVED. IT TAKES FOREVER TO GET THAT OTHER-DIMENSION SMELL OUT OF MY CLOTHES.
IN POINT OF FACT, BUFFY, YOU'RE THE ONE MOST NEEDED ON EARTH.
THE MISTRESS AND THE SOUL GLUTTON ESCAPED. THEY'RE DESPERATE. THEY'LL MAKE A BID TO RETAIN THEIR POWER AND POSITION.
SO? D'HOFFRYN AND THE MAGIC COUNCIL CAN HANDLE THEM.
I DON'T KNOW THAT THEY CAN. OUR ENEMIES HAVE SPENT MONTHS BRINGING DEMONS TO EARTH, MANY COVERTLY.
THESE DEMONS NOW OWE THEM A DEBT THEY'RE SURE TO CALL IN. THE COUNCIL'S BARELY BEEN ABLE TO KEEP UP WITH THE ONSLAUGHT THUS FAR. AN INCREASE IN HOSTILITIES WILL REQUIRE ALL HANDS ON DECK.
AND WHEN THE SOUL GLUTTON HAS FED WELL, HE BECOMES INCREDIBLY POWERFUL. YOUR SCYTHE IS THE ONLY WEAPON THAT HAS SHOWN AN ABILITY TO TRULY HURT HIM IN THAT STATE.
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO LEAVE DAWN HERE?
IT TURNS MY STOMACH EVEN SAYING IT. BUT YOU SAW WHAT SHE'S CAPABLE OF. SHE'S IN NO DANGER.
DAWN, PLEASE KNOW I WOULD NOT EVEN SUGGEST IT IF INNOCENT LIVES DID NOT HANG IN THE BALANCE.
BUT, OBJECTIVELY SPEAKING, THE WISEST COURSE IS FOR YOU TO REMAIN HERE WHILE WE RETURN TO EARTH AND DEAL WITH THE MORE PRESSING THREAT.
THE MOMENT THAT IS RESOLVED, WE WILL FIND OUR WAY TO YOU AND BRING YOU HOME.


NOT A BLOODY CHANCE!
SPIKE, IT'S OKAY. IT'S NOT LIKE ANYTHING CAN HURT ME.
YOU'VE MADE THESE AMAZING SACRIFICES--FOR ME... FOR THE WORLD. I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED IF I COULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT. IF I COULD BE THAT BRAVE.
IT'S KINDA COOL TO FIND OUT THAT I CAN.
I'LL DO IT. I *WANT* TO DO IT.
YOU MOST CERTAINLY WILL *NOT!*
SLAYER! TELL YOUR SISTER TO MIND HER ELDERS.
BUFFY...?
YOU'RE *SURE* YOU'RE OKAY WITH THIS?
YEAH. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I'LL BE FINE.
HAS THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE GONE MAD?

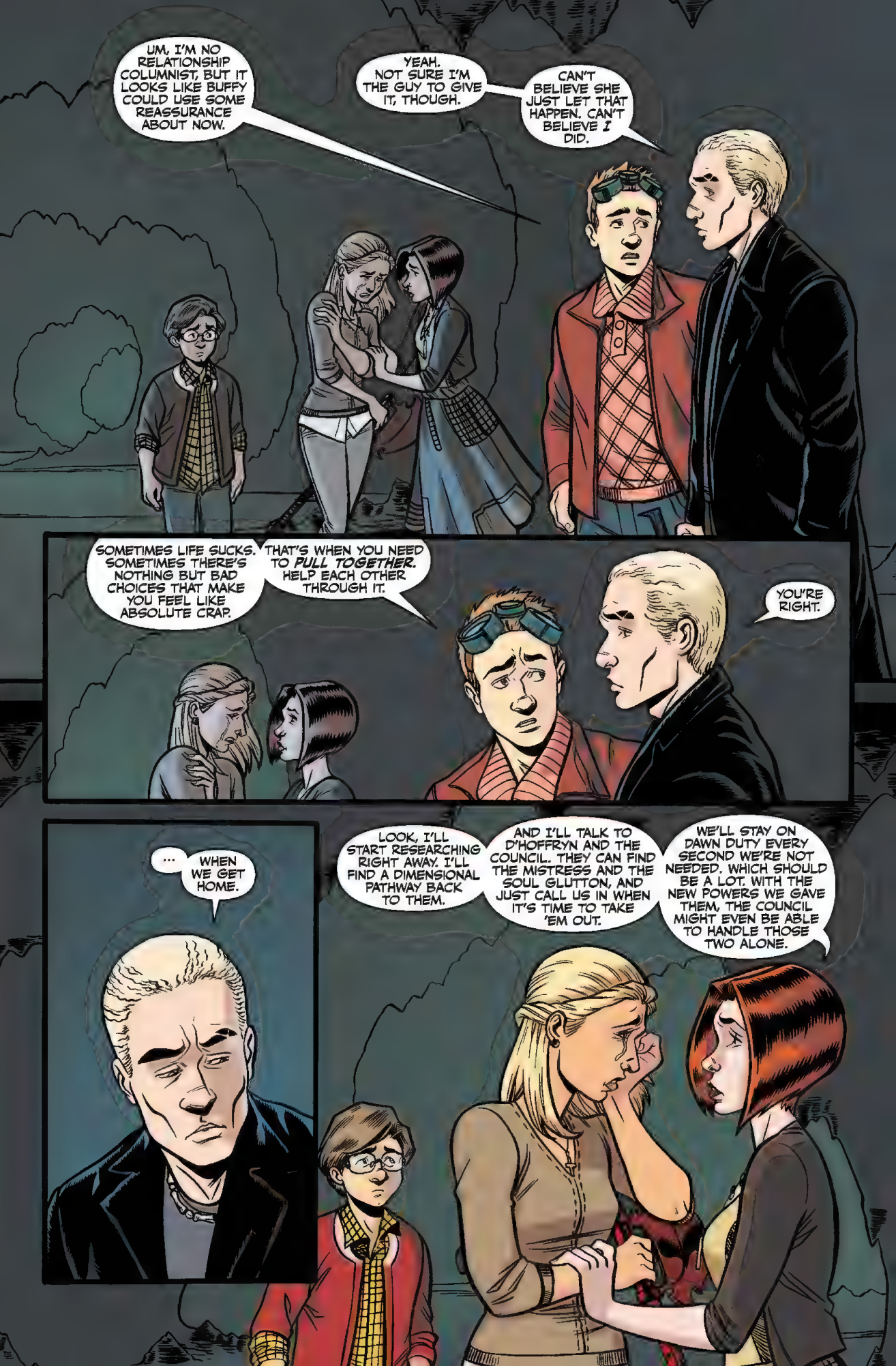
SPIKE, SHE'S AN ADULT. SHE MADE HER DECISION, AND I...I DON'T LIKE IT...BUT I GET WHY IT'S NECESSARY.
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DIED BECAUSE WE WEREN'T CAREFUL ENOUGH WITH THE RESTLESS DOOR. IF WE DON'T STOP THIS, BILLIONS COULD DIE. I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
DAWN CAN'T EITHER. AND I'M PROUD OF HER FOR THAT.
SO YOU'LL GLADLY ABANDON HER IN THIS HELLHOLE?
NOT "GLADLY." NOT EVEN CLOSE.
THIS ISN'T WHAT ANY OF US WANTS, SPIKE.
BUT HOW OFTEN DO WE GET THAT?

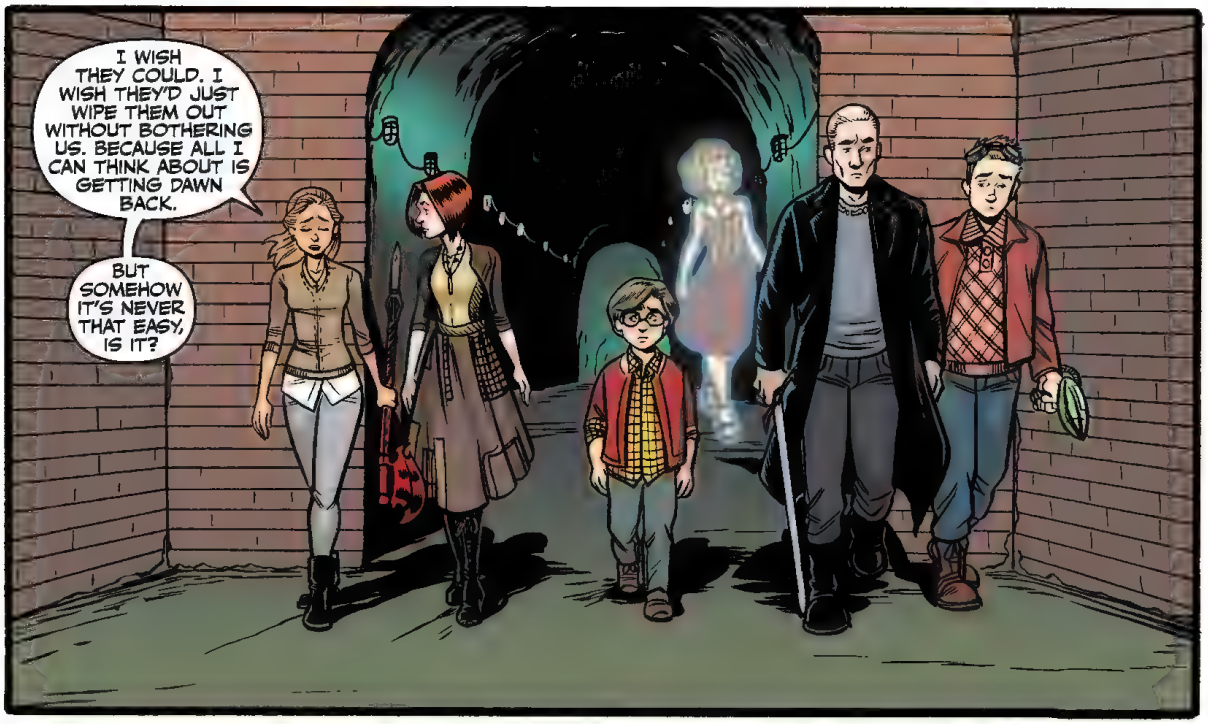
SOD IT, THEN. I'M STAYING WITH YOU.
I'M NOT SURE THAT'S WISE.
HELL DIMENSIONS CAN HAVE... UNPREDICTABLE EFFECTS ON VAMPIRES.
HE'S RIGHT. I SAW ANGEL LOSE CONTROL OF HIMSELF IN QUOR'TOTH, AND HE TOLD ME THE SAME THING HAPPENED IN PYLEA. HE TURNED SAVAGE...CONSUMED BY BLOOD LUST.
IF THAT HAPPENS TO YOU, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO HURT DAWN.
BUT SHE MIGHT BE FORCED TO HURT YOU.
I'LL STAY.
I MEAN... I'M NO BIG LOSS IN THE WAR, RIGHT?
XANDER, NO. I KNOW YOU STILL... HAVE FEELINGS FOR ME, BUT THAT'S ALL THE MORE REASON I CAN'T ASK YOU TO--
YOU'RE NOT ASKING. I'M OFFERING. AND IT'S NOT ABOUT THAT.
YOU'RE MY FRIEND.
FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS STAY IN HELL ALONE.

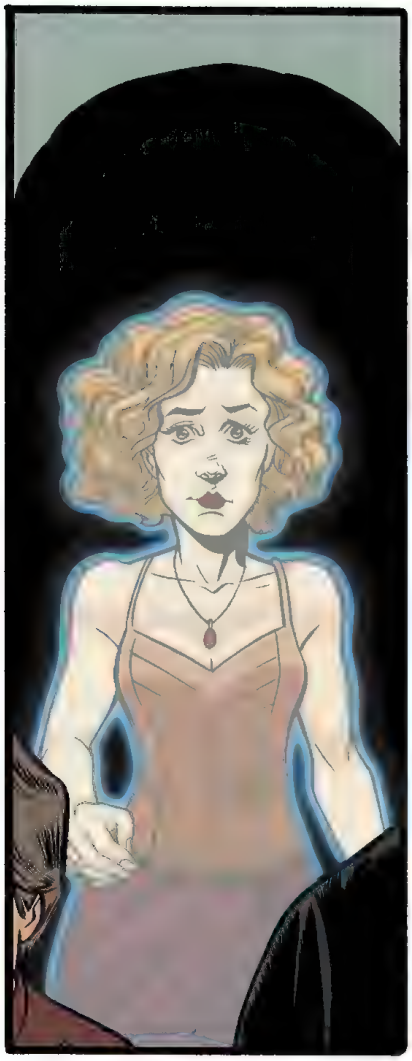

IT'S DANGEROUS HERE.
LUCKY I HAVE A GOD TO PROTECT ME.
THEY'LL COME BACK FOR US SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, SPIKE'S RIGHT. YOU SHOULD HAVE COMPANY. IN MY EXPERIENCE, DEMONS ARE TERRIBLE CONVERSATIONALISTS.
MY SPELL'S SHOWING THAT TIME DOES PASS A LITTLE FASTER HERE.
LIKE, SIX WEEKS FOR EVERY MONTH. IT...COULD BE A WHILE. NOT *TOO* LONG, BUT--
HEY. IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS DOING MUCH WITH MY LIFE BACK HOME.
MAYBE THIS IS EXACTLY THE CHANGE I NEED. A CHANCE TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT MYSELF AND GET MY ACT TOGETHER. LIKE ROCKY TRAINING IN THE MOUNTAINS.
YOU'RE DOING ME A ***FAVOR*** BY LETTING ME STAY.
THANK YOU FOR SAYING THAT. EVEN IF IT'S RIDICULOUS.
AND THANK YOU FOR STAYING WITH ME.
ANYONE MESSES WITH YOU, JUST ZAP 'EM TO DUST. THEY'RE DEMONS. THEY DESERVE IT. I'LL BE BACK ***REAL*** SOON.
I'LL BE FINE. JUST...HURRY, OKAY?

LITTLE BIT...I WISH... I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD DO.
I KNOW. BUT IT'LL BE OKAY.
XANDER, DON'T DO THIS.
I CAN'T FOLLOW YOU. I CAN'T GET THROUGH THE PORTAL...FOR SOME REASON I HAVE TO STAY HERE.
REALLY? THEN THAT PROVES THERE'S MORE TO YOU THAN HAUNTING ME. YOU'RE LINKED TO EARTH SOMEHOW. THAT'S A HUGE STEP.
WITHOUT ME, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE THAT MUCH FASTER.
NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE ME! IT'LL BE WORSE THAN NOT EXISTING AT ALL!
THAT PSYCHIC WE EXORSIZED SENSED YOU. TRY HER...OR A MEDIUM. THERE'S ALL KINDS OF SUPERNATURAL FOLKS WE NEVER CONSULTED, BECAUSE WE WERE IN A RUT...AND COMFORTABLE IN IT.
I'M SORRY. I REALLY AM. BUT YOU NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU ARE, AND I HONESTLY BELIEVE I'M HOLDING YOU BACK FROM THAT. I CAN HELP DAWN. I WAS HURTING YOU.
I'LL BE BACK SOON. I HOPE YOU'VE FIGURED THINGS OUT BY THEN, BUT IF YOU HAVEN'T, I'LL HELP ANY WAY I CAN. T-TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, OKAY?
YOU'LL REGRET THIS! I WAS A VENGEANCE DEMON! I KNOW FROM PAYBACK!
AND I WILL MAKE YOU PAY FOR THIS, XANDER HARRIS!
BUFFY, I KNOW HOW HARD THIS IS. AND I WON'T TELL YOU NOT TO WORRY. BUT REMEMBER SHE'S NOT ALONE. I'M LOOKING OUT FOR HER.
YOU'RE THE BEST LOOKER-OUTER I COULD ASK FOR. AND THE BEST FRIEND.
I'LL SKIP THE TEARFUL GOODBYES, IF THAT'S OKAY. BECAUSE I KNOW I'LL SEE YOU ALL AGAIN SOON.
NOW GET YOUR HINDQUARTERS BACK THERE AND START FIGURING OUT HOW TO BRING US HOME.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT SCHOOL. WE'LL EXPLAIN... SOMETHING MORE PLAUSIBLE THAN THIS.
AND WE'LL HAVE YOU BACK IN CLASS BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.
I LOVE YOU GUYS.
NOW LET'S SEE IF THIS ACTUALLY WORKS...
YAY ME.
SO. WANNA SEE WHAT THIS HELLHOLE'S GOT IN THE WAY OF FOOD?


UM, I'M NO RELATIONSHIP COLUMNIST, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE BUFFY COULD USE SOME REASSURANCE ABOUT NOW.
YEAH. NOT SURE I'M THE GUY TO GIVE IT, THOUGH.
CAN'T BELIEVE SHE JUST LET THAT HAPPEN. CAN'T BELIEVE I DID.
SOMETIMES LIFE SUCKS. SOMETIMES THERE'S NOTHING BUT BAD CHOICES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE ABSOLUTE CRAP.
THAT'S WHEN YOU NEED TO *PULL TOGETHER.* HELP EACH OTHER THROUGH IT.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
...
WHEN WE GET HOME.
LOOK, I'LL START RESEARCHING RIGHT AWAY. I'LL FIND A DIMENSIONAL PATHWAY BACK TO THEM.
AND I'LL TALK TO D'HOFFRYN AND THE COUNCIL. THEY CAN FIND THE MISTRESS AND THE SOUL GLUTTON, AND JUST CALL US IN WHEN IT'S TIME TO TAKE 'EM OUT.
WE'LL STAY ON DAWN DUTY EVERY SECOND WE'RE NOT NEEDED. WHICH SHOULD BE A LOT. WITH THE NEW POWERS WE GAVE THEM, THE COUNCIL MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO HANDLE THOSE TWO ALONE.


I WISH THEY COULD. I WISH THEY'D JUST WIPE THEM OUT WITHOUT BOTHERING US. BECAUSE ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS GETTING DAWN BACK.
BUT SOMEHOW IT'S NEVER THAT EASY, IS IT?



SOMETIMES IT IS.

WISH GRANTED.

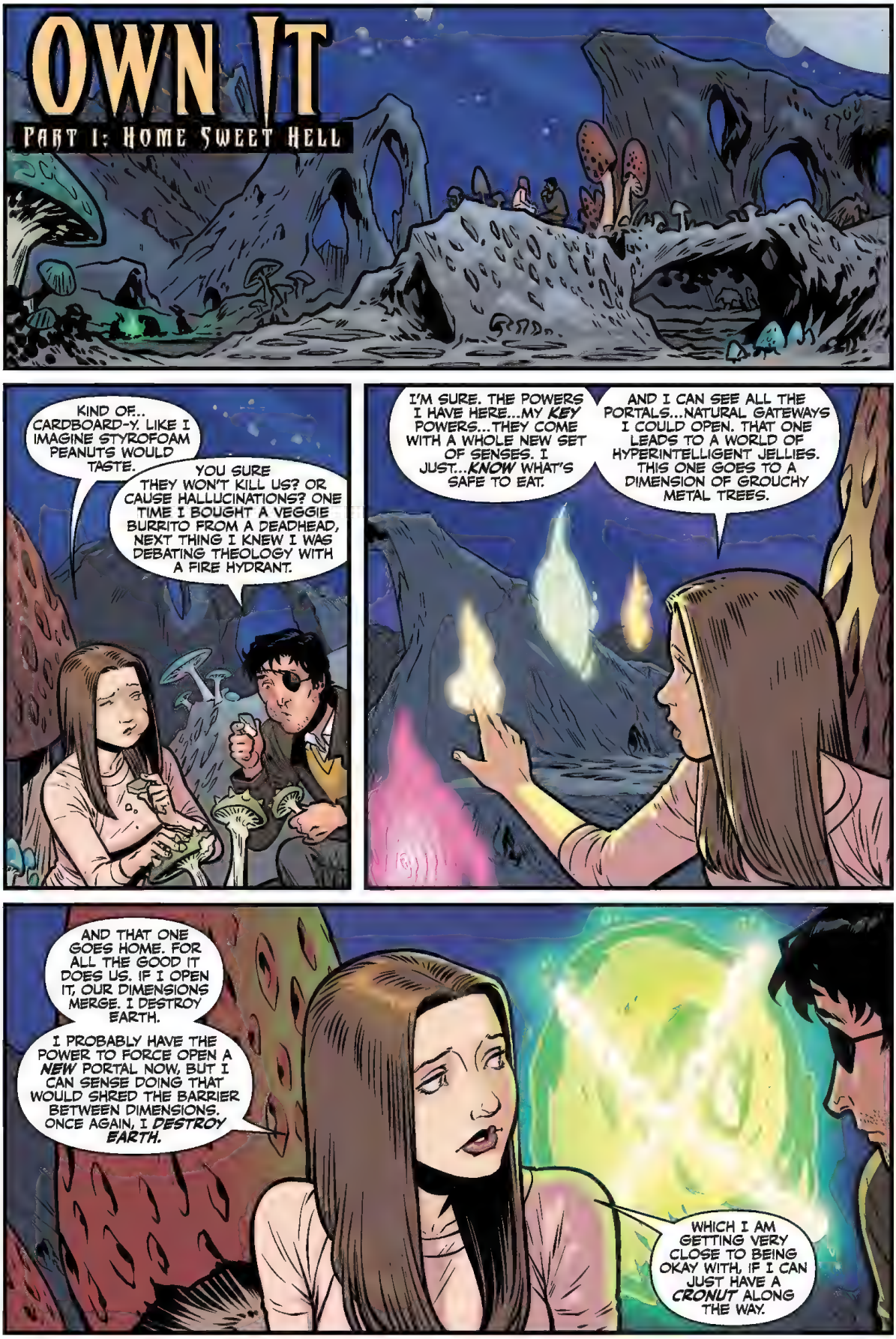
SILICON VALLEY.
AIIEEEEE!
MUCH BETTER. HOW ARE YOU FEELING, DEARIE?
THE SOULS OF THESE PEASANTS HAVE RESTORED ME. I AM GLUTTED. BURSTING WITH POWER. NONE CAN STAND AGAINST ME.
WE SHALL GATHER OUR ALLIES...AND I SHALL HAVE MY VENGEANCE AT LAST!
I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE.
AND THAT'S A SUBJECT I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT.

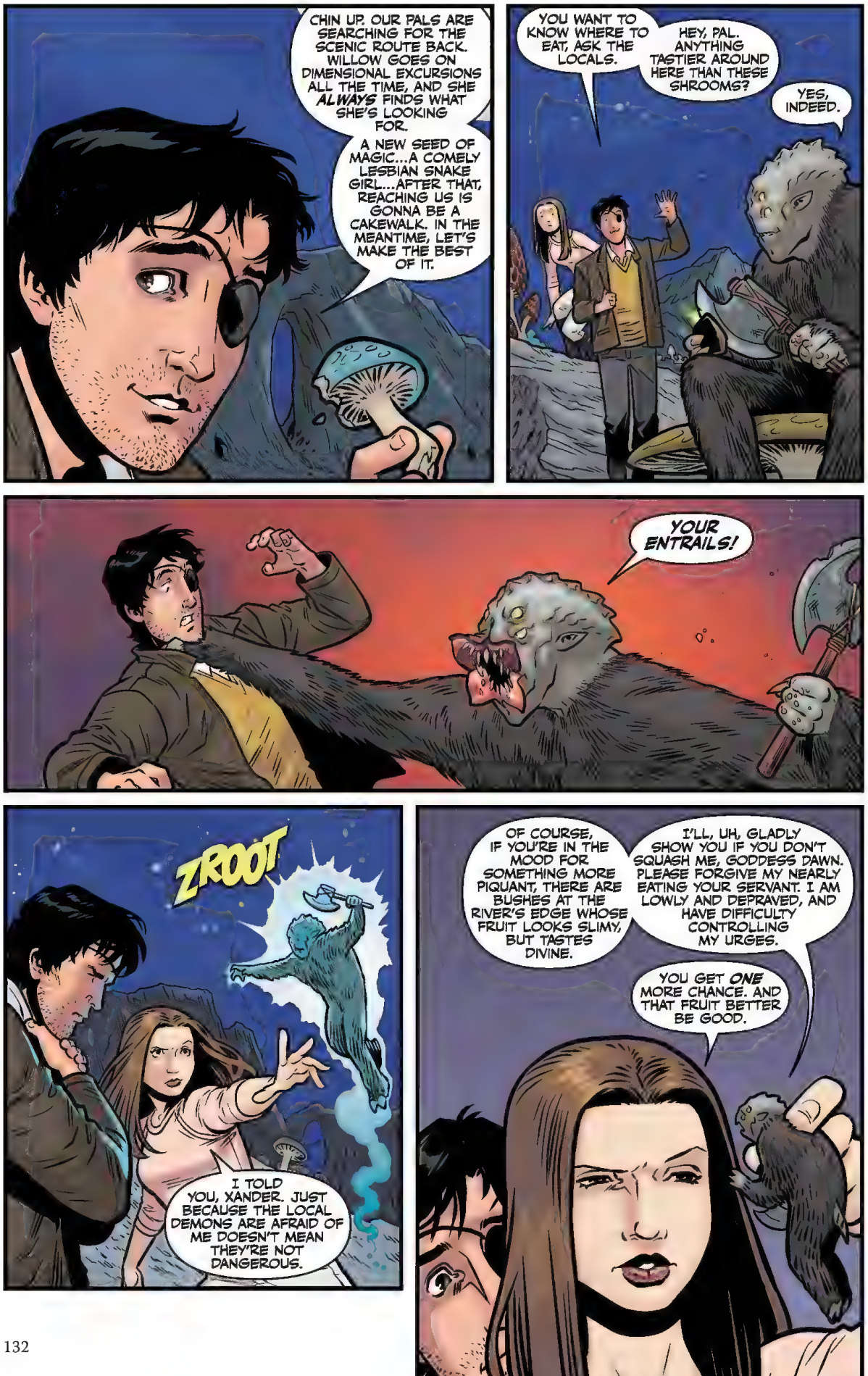
I AM, AFTER ALL, LORD OF THE VENGEANCE DEMONS, AM I NOT?
D'HOFFRYN! YOU ARE TOO LATE, BUREAUCRAT.
BRING YOUR ENTIRE COUNCIL AGAINST ME. YOU WILL ALL DIE!
SHAKAVOOSH
OH, IT WON'T BE NECESSARY TO TROUBLE THEM.
IMPOSSIBLE! EVEN ONE OF THE LOWER BEINGS SHOULD HAVE BEEN INCINERATED BY THAT MUCH SOUL FIRE!

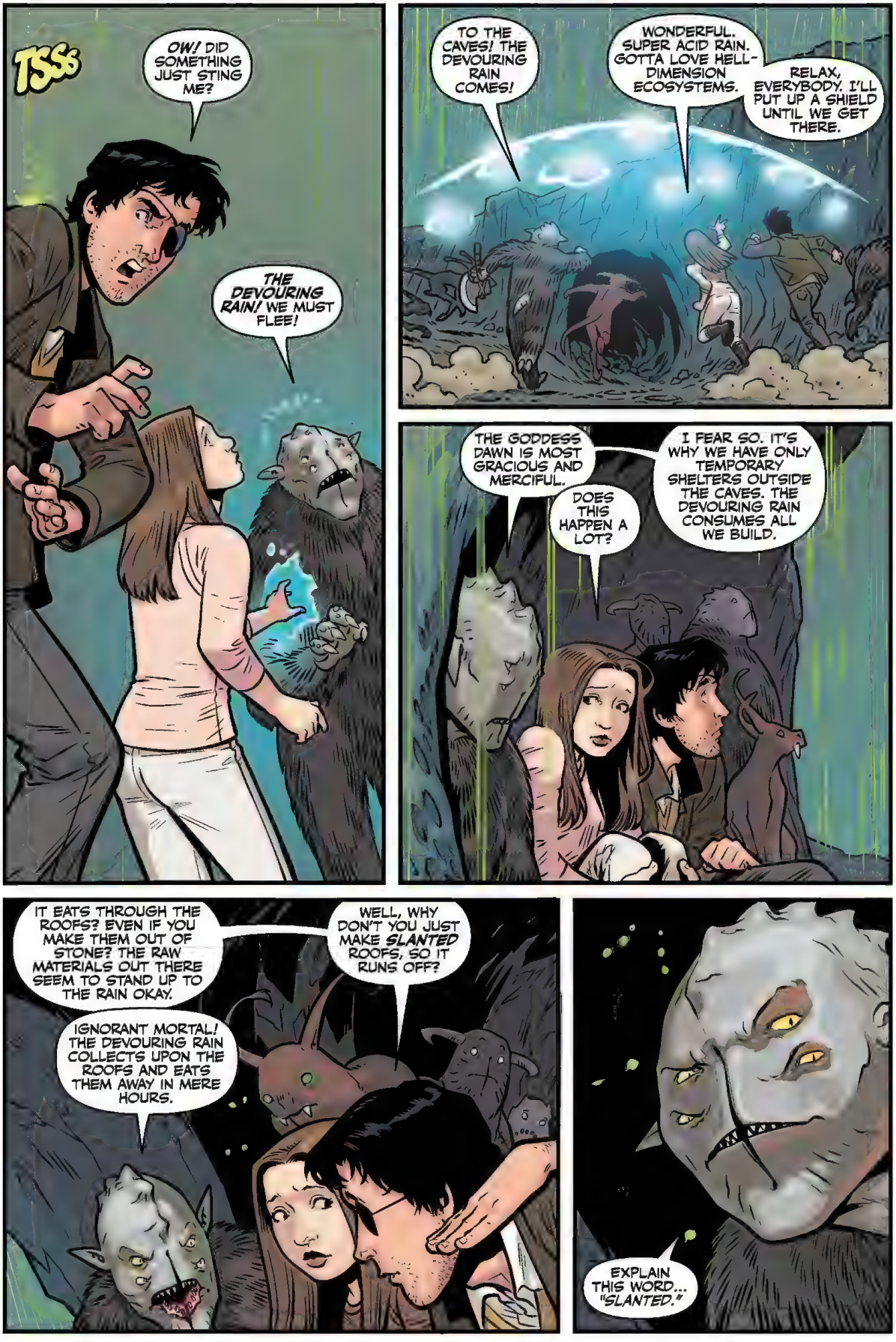
QUITE RIGHT. UNDER THE NORMAL LAWS OF REALITY.
BUT A VENGEANCE DEMON MAY SUBVERT THE LAWS OF REALITY IN ORDER TO FULFILL A HUMAN'S WISH.
GRARRAAAGHHH!
MY SOULS! GIVE ME BACK MY SOULS!
AND THE SLAYER WISHED THAT YOU BE ENDED.
WHICH I FIND ENTIRELY ACCEPTABLE...
...SEEING THAT YOU'VE ALREADY SERVED YOUR PURPOSE.
SQUISH

WELL DONE, D'HOFFRYN. HE WAS A SINGLE-MINDED FOOL. WHEREAS I AM FAR MORE... ACCOMMODATING.
WHATEVER YOUR AGENDA, I CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE IT. ANYTHING YOU DESIRE, I WILL SEE THAT YOU GET IT.
HOW GENEROUS, DEAR LADY. AND MY DESIRE IS QUITE SIMPLE, REALLY.
AT TIMES, WHEN FULFILLING A MORTAL'S WISH, I TASTE TRUE POWER. OMNIPOTENCE.
I RIP AND TEAR AND BEND THE VERY FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO MY WILL. WELL...ACCORDING TO THEIR WILL. THEREIN LIES THE PROBLEM.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL THAT--FOR JUST A MOMENT--AND THEN HAVE IT SLIP FROM YOUR HANDS?
AH! BUT I KNOW HOW YOU CAN ATTAIN THAT KIND OF POWER. FOREVER!
THE VAMPYR BOOK! WRITE THE LAWS OF MAGIC TO YOUR OWN ENDS! ALL YOU NEED DO IS SEIZE IT FROM THE SLAYER AND HER ALLIES!
A MOST INTRIGUING PLAN...
GHHAEEEEE!
...THAT I FORMED MYSELF, LONG AGO, AND NO LONGER NEED YOU TO SEE TO FRUITION.

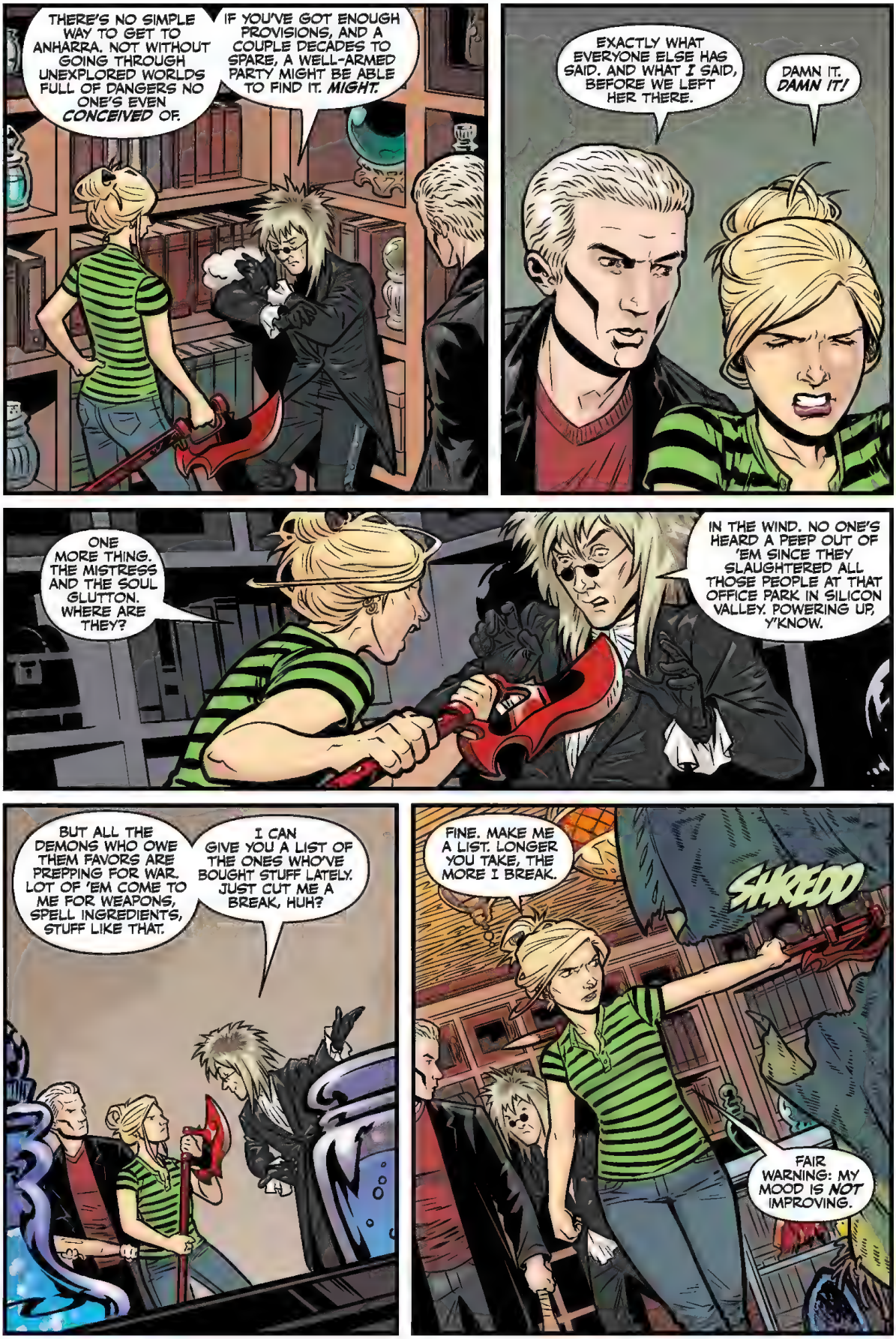
I THINK THAT'S THE CLOSEST WE'VE EVER MADE A WISH TURN OUT TO WHAT THE WISHER ACTUALLY WANTED.
AND YOU DID IT EVERY BIT AS RUTHLESSLY AS THE TRUE ANYA EVER DID.
WHEN SHE WAS MY FAVORED ONE--BEFORE THOSE SELFISH, SHALLOW CHILDREN STOLE HER FROM ME, LEADING HER DOWN THE ROAD TO MORTALITY, RUIN, AND DEATH.
I KEEP FORGETTING I'M NOT HER.
NO. YOU ARE A COPY, MADE AS NEAR AS I COULD MANAGE TO THE ORIGINAL. SO CLOSE, IT WAS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE TRUTH FROM YOU...
...UNTIL YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF THE DUPLICITY AND SELF-CENTEREDNESS OF YOUR "FRIENDS," AND GAINED THE NECESSARY PERSPECTIVE FOR ME TO MAKE YOU A VENGEANCE DEMON.
THEN...NOTHING ABOUT ME IS REAL?
TO THE CONTRARY, MY DEAR.
YOU ARE NOW SOLID. AND IMMORTAL. THE CROWN JEWEL OF MY NEWLY RECONSTITUTED RANKS OF VENGEANCE DEMONS.
AND OUR FUTURE... OH, OUR FUTURE!
IT WILL BE GLORIOUS.


OWN IT
PART 1: HOME SWEET HELL
KIND OF... CARDBOARD-Y. LIKE I IMAGINE STYROFOAM PEANUTS WOULD TASTE.
YOU SURE THEY WON'T KILL US? OR CAUSE HALLUCINATIONS? ONE TIME I BOUGHT A VEGGIE BURRITO FROM A DEADHEAD, NEXT THING I KNEW I WAS DEBATING THEOLOGY WITH A FIRE HYDRANT.
I'M SURE. THE POWERS I HAVE HERE...MY KEY POWERS...THEY COME WITH A WHOLE NEW SET OF SENSES. I JUST...KNOW WHAT'S SAFE TO EAT.
AND I CAN SEE ALL THE PORTALS...NATURAL GATEWAYS I COULD OPEN. THAT ONE LEADS TO A WORLD OF HYPERINTELLIGENT JELLIES. THIS ONE GOES TO A DIMENSION OF GROUCHY METAL TREES.
AND THAT ONE GOES HOME. FOR ALL THE GOOD IT DOES US. IF I OPEN IT, OUR DIMENSIONS MERGE. I DESTROY EARTH.
I PROBABLY HAVE THE POWER TO FORCE OPEN A NEW PORTAL NOW, BUT I CAN SENSE DOING THAT WOULD SHRED THE BARRIER BETWEEN DIMENSIONS. ONCE AGAIN, I DESTROY EARTH.
WHICH I AM GETTING VERY CLOSE TO BEING OKAY WITH, IF I CAN JUST HAVE A CRONUT ALONG THE WAY.

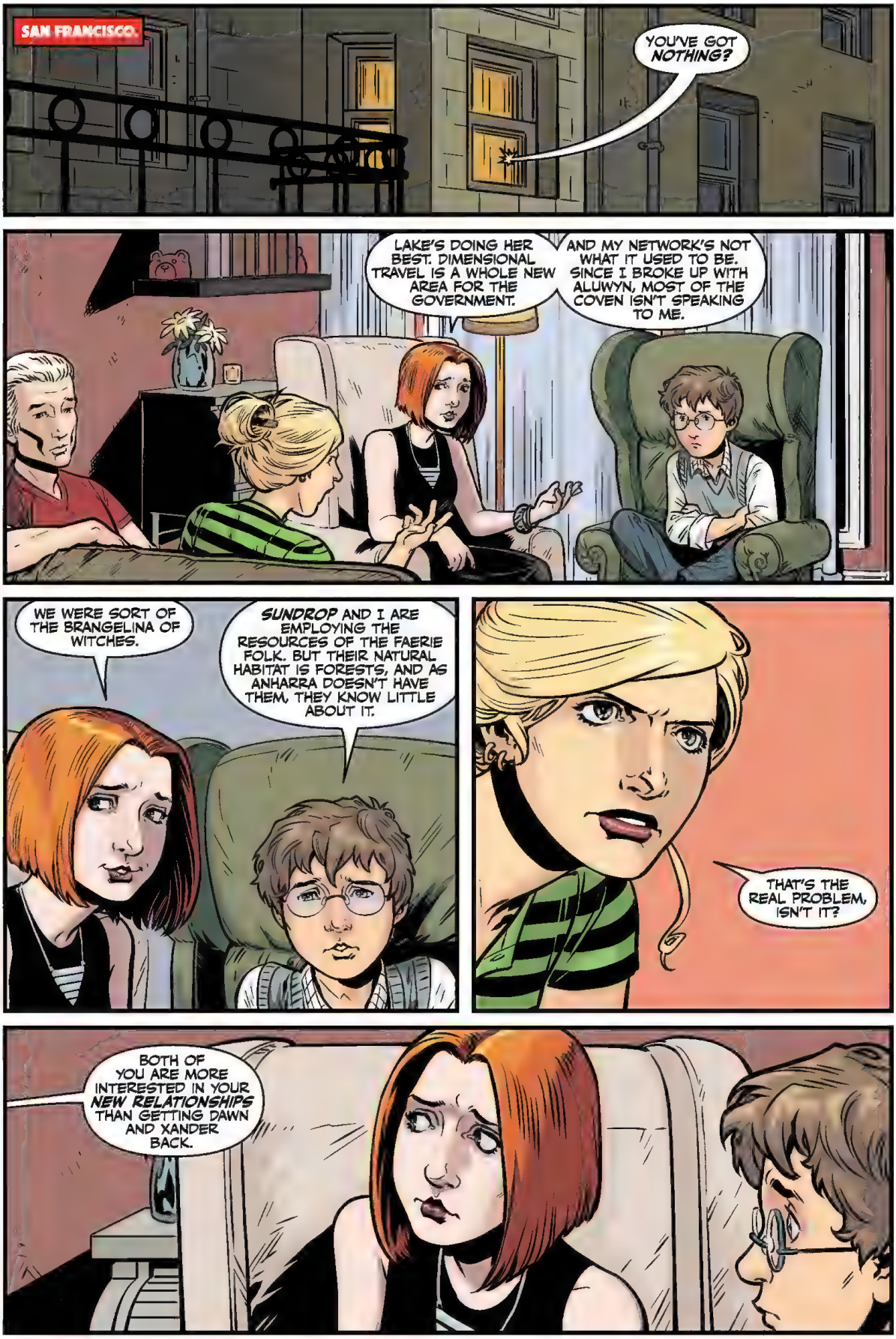

CHIN UP. OUR PALS ARE SEARCHING FOR THE SCENIC ROUTE BACK. WILLOW GOES ON DIMENSIONAL EXCURSIONS ALL THE TIME, AND SHE ALWAYS FINDS WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR.
A NEW SEED OF MAGIC...A COMELY LESBIAN SNAKE GIRL...AFTER THAT, REACHING US IS GONNA BE A CAKEWALK. IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S MAKE THE BEST OF IT.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE TO EAT, ASK THE LOCALS.
HEY, PAL. ANYTHING TASTIER AROUND HERE THAN THESE SHROOMS?
YES, INDEED.
YOUR ENTRAILS!
ZROOT
I TOLD YOU, XANDER. JUST BECAUSE THE LOCAL DEMONS ARE AFRAID OF ME DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE NOT DANGEROUS.
OF COURSE, IF YOU'RE IN THE MOOD FOR SOMETHING MORE PIQUANT, THERE ARE BUSHES AT THE RIVER'S EDGE WHOSE FRUIT LOOKS SLIMY, BUT TASTES DIVINE.
I'LL, UH, GLADLY SHOW YOU IF YOU DON'T SQUASH ME, GODDESS DAWN. PLEASE FORGIVE MY NEARLY EATING YOUR SERVANT. I AM LOWLY AND DEPRAVED, AND HAVE DIFFICULTY CONTROLLING MY URGES.
YOU GET ONE MORE CHANCE. AND THAT FRUIT BETTER BE GOOD.

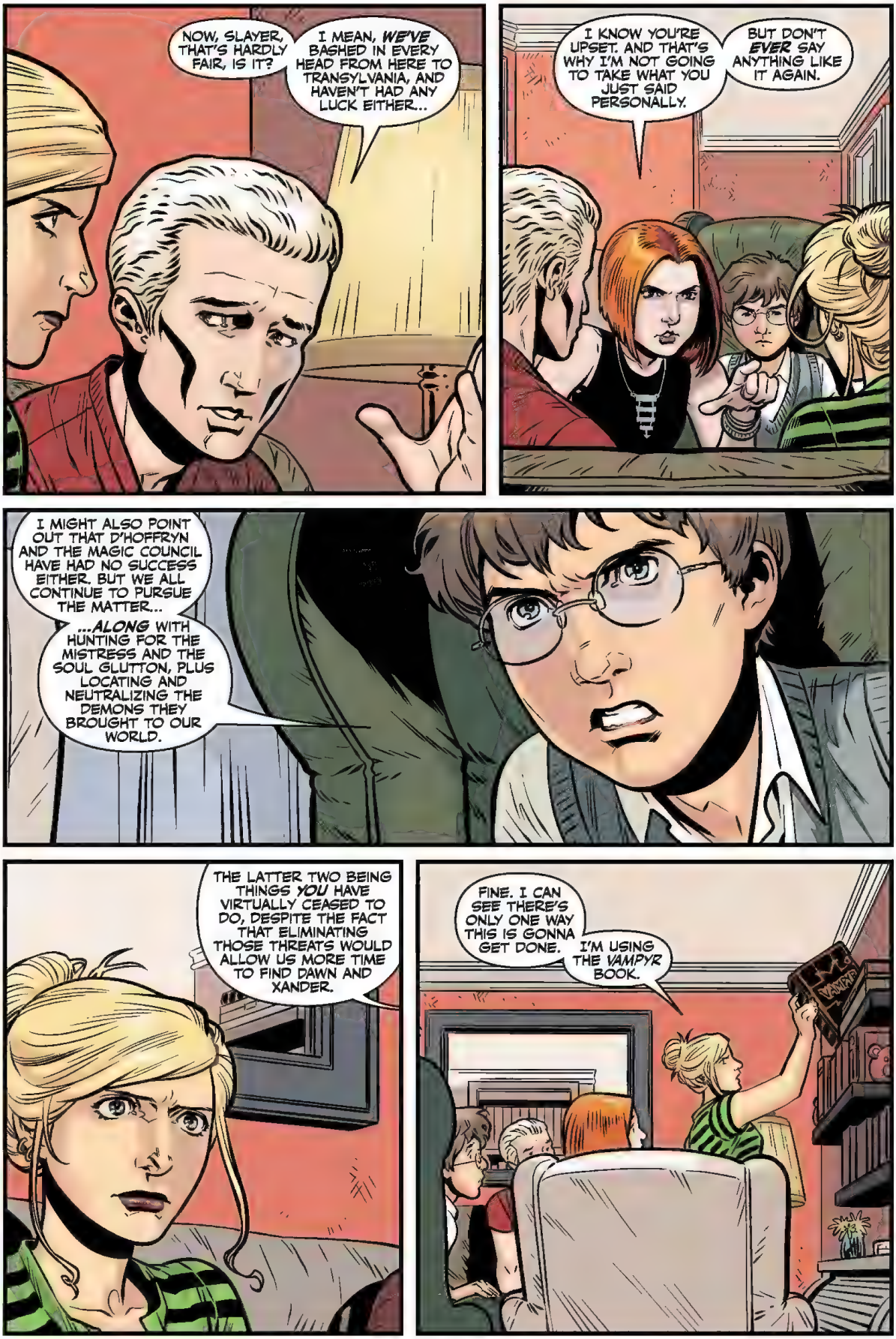

TSSs
OW! DID SOMETHING JUST STING ME?
THE DEVOURING RAIN! WE MUST FLEE!
TO THE CAVES! THE DEVOURING RAIN COMES!
WONDERFUL. SUPER ACID RAIN. GOTTA LOVE HELL-DIMENSION ECOSYSTEMS.
RELAX, EVERYBODY. I'LL PUT UP A SHIELD UNTIL WE GET THERE.
THE GODDESS DAWN IS MOST GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL.
DOES THIS HAPPEN A LOT?
I FEAR SO. IT'S WHY WE HAVE ONLY TEMPORARY SHELTERS OUTSIDE THE CAVES. THE DEVOURING RAIN CONSUMES ALL WE BUILD.
IT EATS THROUGH THE ROOFS? EVEN IF YOU MAKE THEM OUT OF STONE? THE RAW MATERIALS OUT THERE SEEM TO STAND UP TO THE RAIN OKAY.
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST MAKE SLANTED ROOFS, SO IT RUNS OFF?
IGNORANT MORTAL! THE DEVOURING RAIN COLLECTS UPON THE ROOFS AND EATS THEM AWAY IN MERE HOURS.
EXPLAIN THIS WORD... "SLANTED."

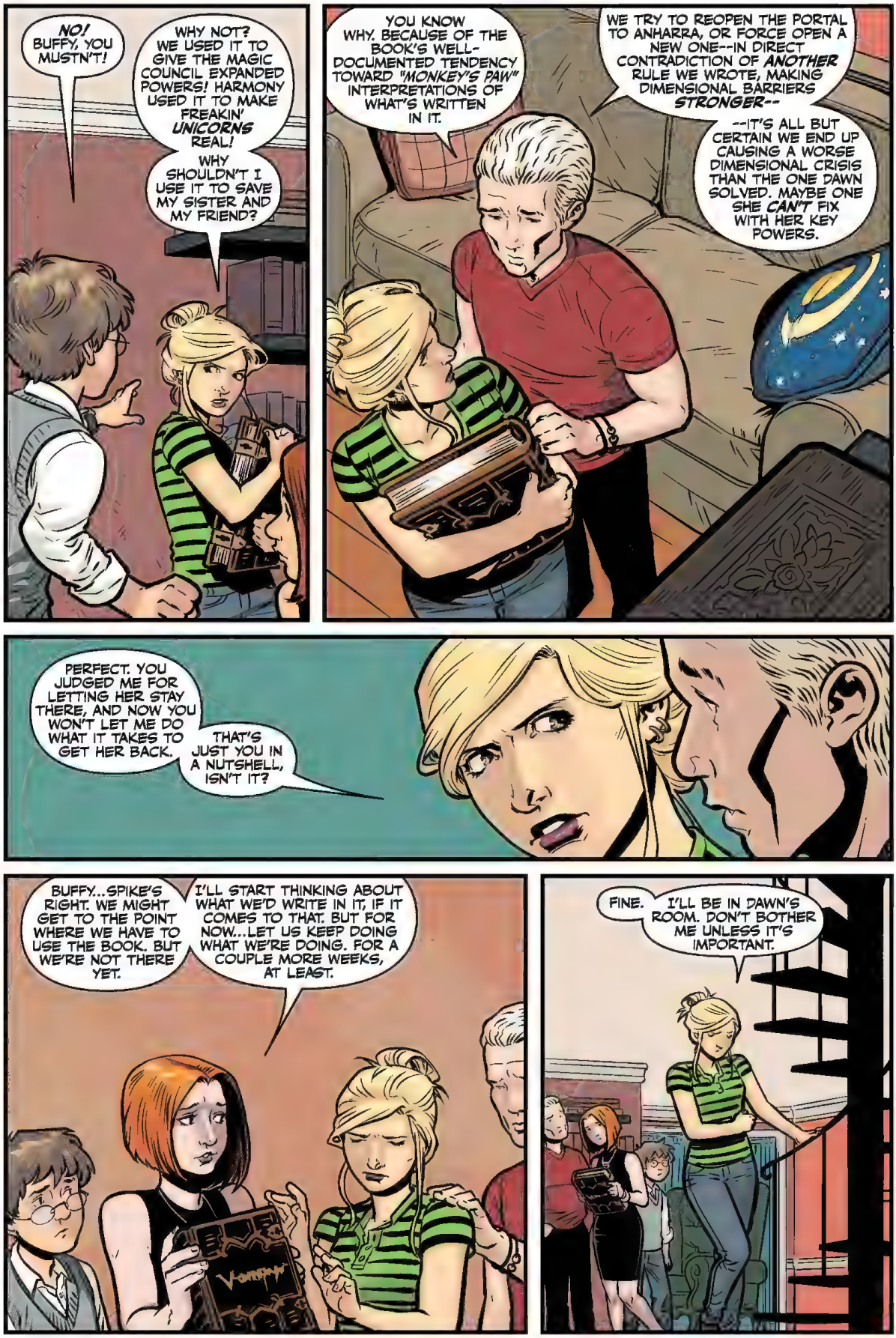
LOS ANGELES.
TELL ME HOW TO GET TO ANHARRA!
WORD ON THE STREET IS YOU CAN GET ANYTHING, FROM ANYWHERE. I NEED TO REACH A DIMENSION CALLED ANHARRA.
EITHER YOU DRAW ME A MAP, OR ALL THIS CRAP YOU'VE SMUGGLED HERE IN VIOLATION OF U.S. INTER-DIMENSIONAL TRADE REGULATIONS GOES BYE-BYE.
CAN'T HELP YOU, SLAYER. ANHARRA'S IN THE DIMENSIONAL BOONIES. NOTHING THERE WORTH HAVING, SO I NEVER SAW A POINT FINDING A WAY IN.
NICE MERCHANDISE YOU'VE GOT. BE A SHAME IF SOMEONE GOT CARELESS WITH IT.
KSHH
NO! STOP! I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!


THERE'S NO SIMPLE WAY TO GET TO ANHARRA. NOT WITHOUT GOING THROUGH UNEXPLORED WORLDS FULL OF DANGERS NO ONE'S EVEN *CONCEIVED* OF.
IF YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH PROVISIONS, AND A COUPLE DECADES TO SPARE, A WELL-ARMED PARTY MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND IT. *MIGHT.*
EXACTLY WHAT EVERYONE ELSE HAS SAID. AND WHAT *I* SAID, BEFORE WE LEFT HER THERE.
DAMN IT. *DAMN IT!*
ONE MORE THING. THE MISTRESS AND THE SOUL GLUTTON. WHERE ARE THEY?
IN THE WIND. NO ONE'S HEARD A PEEP OUT OF 'EM SINCE THEY SLAUGHTERED ALL THOSE PEOPLE AT THAT OFFICE PARK IN SILICON VALLEY. POWERING UP, Y'KNOW.
BUT ALL THE DEMONS WHO OWE THEM FAVORS ARE PREPPING FOR WAR. LOT OF 'EM COME TO ME FOR WEAPONS, SPELL INGREDIENTS, STUFF LIKE THAT.
I CAN GIVE YOU A LIST OF THE ONES WHO'VE BOUGHT STUFF LATELY. JUST CUT ME A BREAK, HUH?
FINE. MAKE ME A LIST. LONGER YOU TAKE, THE MORE I BREAK.
SHREDD
FAIR WARNING: MY MOOD IS *NOT* IMPROVING.

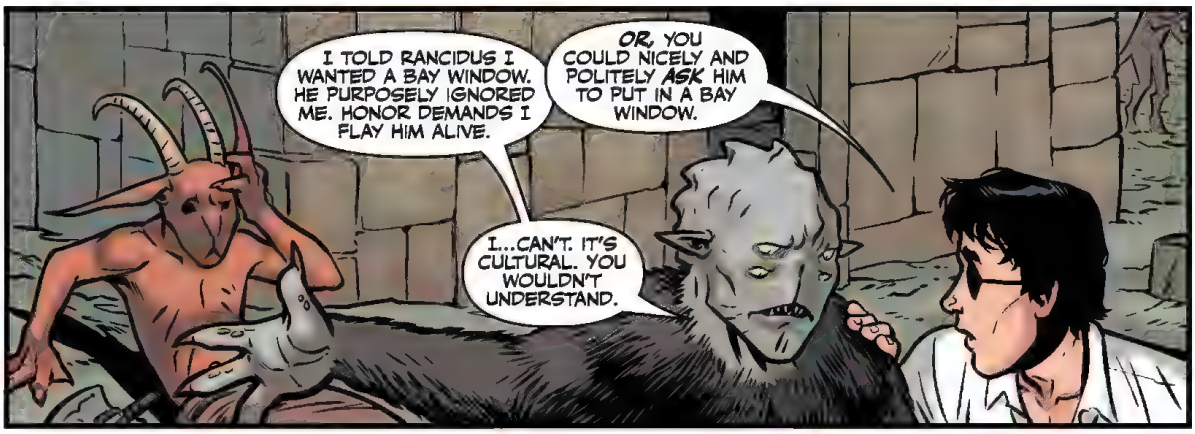
ANHARRA.
YOU ARE SUPREME. YOU ARE ALL POWERFUL. WE BOW DOWN TO YOU!
ALL HAIL LORD XANDER, AND HIS GIFT OF THE GABLE ROOF! NEVER HAVE WE KNOWN SUCH LUXURY!
AW, THAT'S JUST THE START. WE'RE GONNA PUT DOORS AND WINDOWS IN. HEAT. INDOOR PLUMBING.
WHAT IS INDOOR PLUMBING?
ON YOUR WORLD, IS HE WORSHIPED?
ONLY BY HIMSELF.


SAN FRANCISCO.
YOU'VE GOT NOTHING?
LAKE'S DOING HER BEST. DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL IS A WHOLE NEW AREA FOR THE GOVERNMENT.
AND MY NETWORK'S NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE. SINCE I BROKE UP WITH ALUWYN, MOST OF THE COVEN ISN'T SPEAKING TO ME.
WE WERE SORT OF THE BRANGELINA OF WITCHES.
SUNDROP AND I ARE EMPLOYING THE RESOURCES OF THE FAERIE FOLK. BUT THEIR NATURAL HABITAT IS FORESTS, AND AS ANHARRA DOESN'T HAVE THEM, THEY KNOW LITTLE ABOUT IT.
THAT'S THE REAL PROBLEM, ISN'T IT?
BOTH OF YOU ARE MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIPS THAN GETTING DAWN AND XANDER BACK.


NOW, SLAYER, THAT'S HARDLY FAIR, IS IT?
I MEAN, WE'VE BASHED IN EVERY HEAD FROM HERE TO TRANSYLVANIA, AND HAVEN'T HAD ANY LUCK EITHER...
I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET. AND THAT'S WHY I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE WHAT YOU JUST SAID PERSONALLY.
BUT DON'T EVER SAY ANYTHING LIKE IT AGAIN.
I MIGHT ALSO POINT OUT THAT D'HOFFRYN AND THE MAGIC COUNCIL HAVE HAD NO SUCCESS EITHER. BUT WE ALL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THE MATTER...
...ALONG WITH HUNTING FOR THE MISTRESS AND THE SOUL GLUTTON, PLUS LOCATING AND NEUTRALIZING THE DEMONS THEY BROUGHT TO OUR WORLD.
THE LATTER TWO BEING THINGS YOU HAVE VIRTUALLY CEASED TO DO, DESPITE THE FACT THAT ELIMINATING THOSE THREATS WOULD ALLOW US MORE TIME TO FIND DAWN AND XANDER.
FINE. I CAN SEE THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY THIS IS GONNA GET DONE.
I'M USING THE VAMPYR BOOK.
VAMPYR

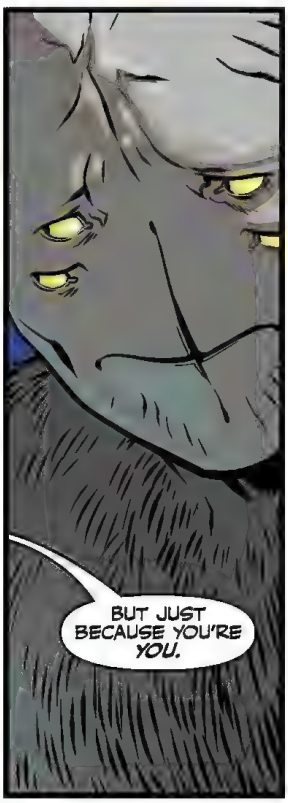

NO! BUFFY, YOU MUSTN'T!
WHY NOT? WE USED IT TO GIVE THE MAGIC COUNCIL EXPANDED POWERS! HARMONY USED IT TO MAKE FREAKIN' UNICORNS REAL!
WHY SHOULDN'T I USE IT TO SAVE MY SISTER AND MY FRIEND?
YOU KNOW WHY. BECAUSE OF THE BOOK'S WELL-DOCUMENTED TENDENCY TOWARD "MONKEY'S PAW" INTERPRETATIONS OF WHAT'S WRITTEN IN IT.
WE TRY TO REOPEN THE PORTAL TO ANHARRA, OR FORCE OPEN A NEW ONE--IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION OF ANOTHER RULE WE WROTE, MAKING DIMENSIONAL BARRIERS STRONGER--
--IT'S ALL BUT CERTAIN WE END UP CAUSING A WORSE DIMENSIONAL CRISIS THAN THE ONE DAWN SOLVED. MAYBE ONE SHE CAN'T FIX WITH HER KEY POWERS.
PERFECT. YOU JUDGED ME FOR LETTING HER STAY THERE, AND NOW YOU WON'T LET ME DO WHAT IT TAKES TO GET HER BACK.
THAT'S JUST YOU IN A NUTSHELL, ISN'T IT?
BUFFY...SPIKE'S RIGHT. WE MIGHT GET TO THE POINT WHERE WE HAVE TO USE THE BOOK. BUT WE'RE NOT THERE YET.
I'LL START THINKING ABOUT WHAT WE'D WRITE IN IT, IF IT COMES TO THAT. BUT FOR NOW...LET US KEEP DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING. FOR A COUPLE MORE WEEKS, AT LEAST.
FINE.
I'LL BE IN DAWN'S ROOM. DON'T BOTHER ME UNLESS IT'S IMPORTANT.

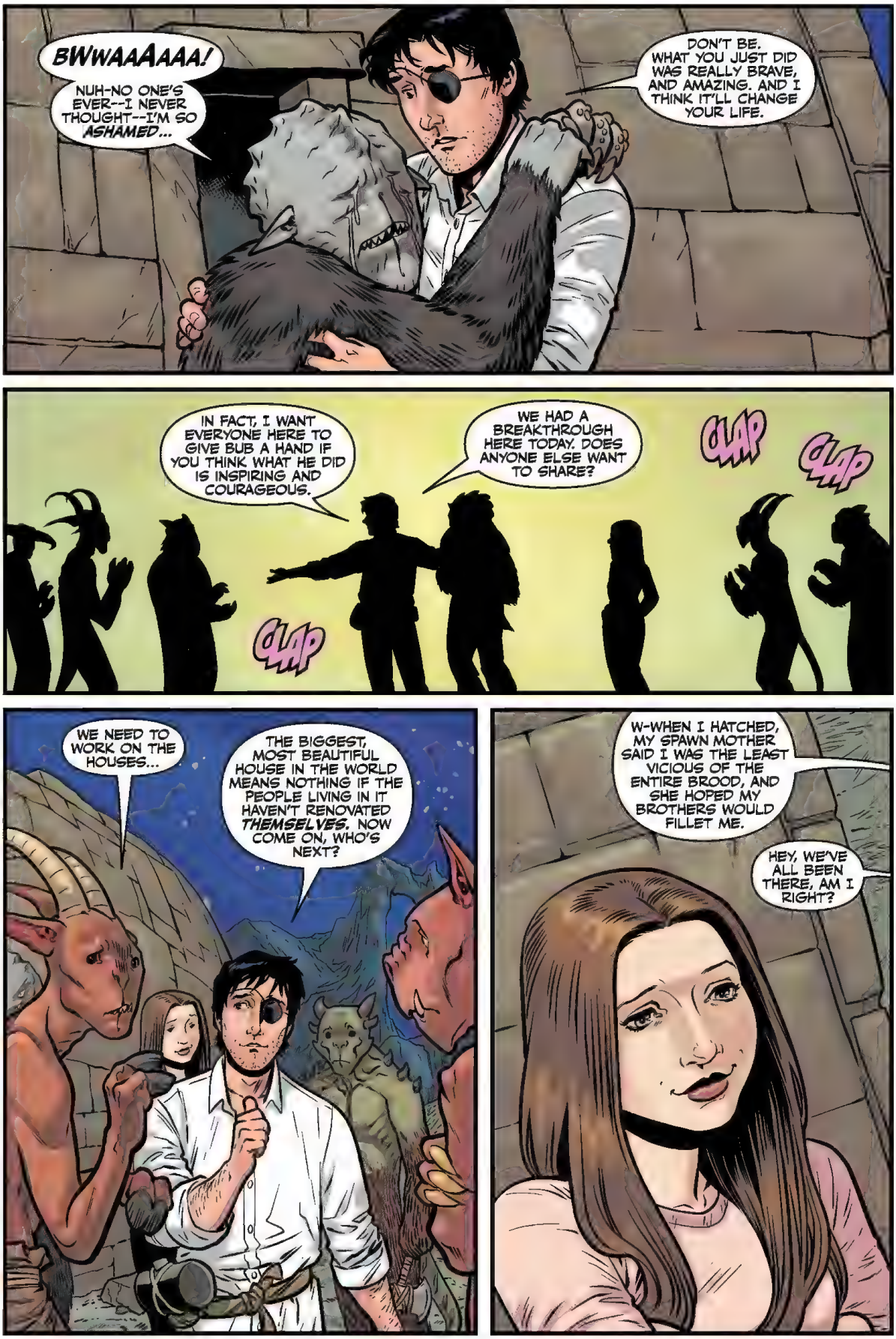
ANUBIS
IMBECILE! TOE FUNGUS! I SAID I WANT A BAY WINDOW! SO I CAN WATCH THE LAKE MONSTERS GAMBOL AND PLAY AND DEVOUR EACH OTHER! I'LL EVISCERATE YOU FOR--
HEY! HEY! BREAK IT UP!

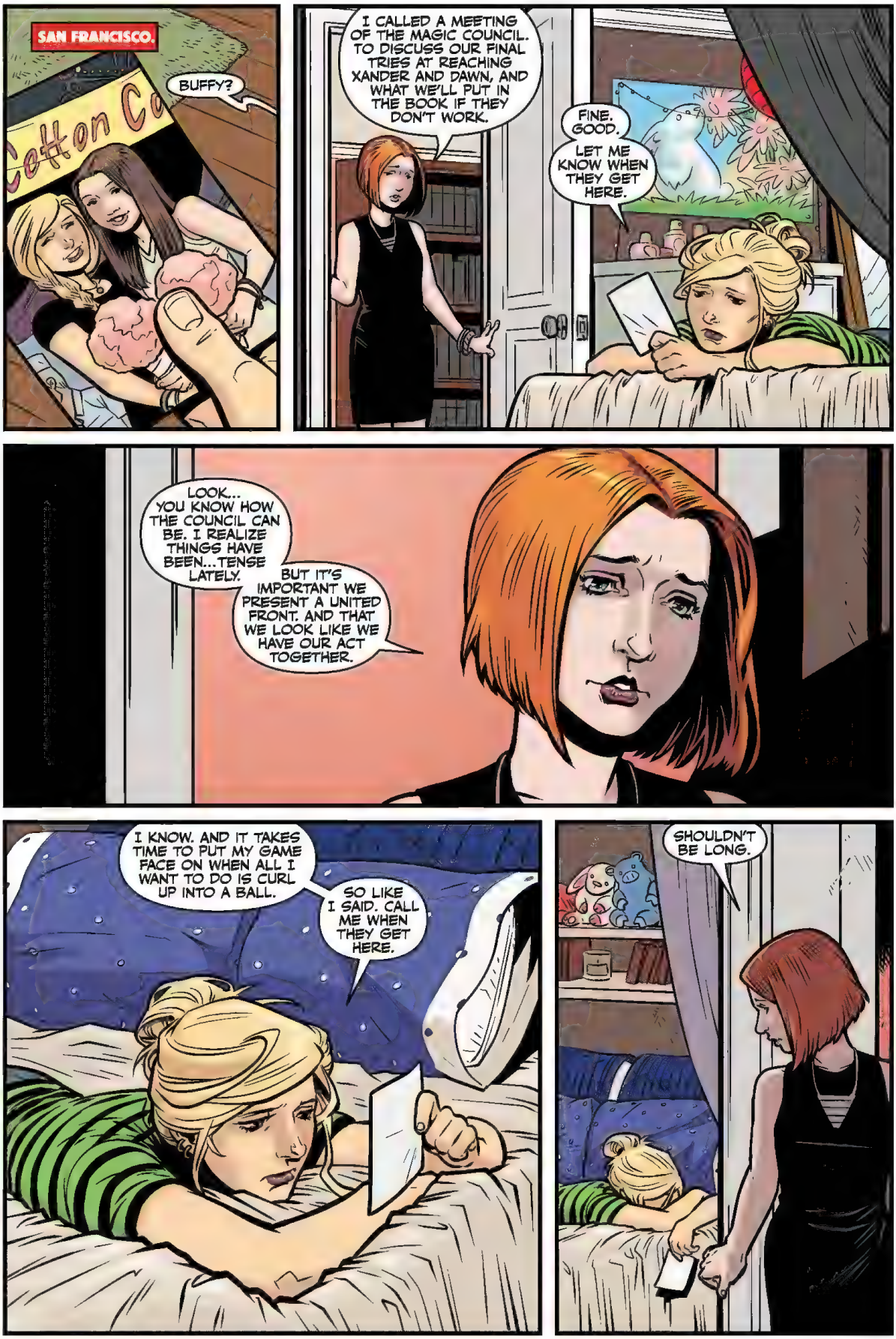

I TOLD RANCIDUS I WANTED A BAY WINDOW. HE PURPOSELY IGNORED ME. HONOR DEMANDS I FLAY HIM ALIVE.
OR, YOU COULD NICELY AND POLITELY ASK HIM TO PUT IN A BAY WINDOW.
I...CAN'T. IT'S CULTURAL. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.

BUB. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS. ANGER IS A MASKING EMOTION. WE USE IT IN PLACE OF FEELINGS WE'RE AFRAID OF. WHAT'S REALLY AT THE CORE OF THIS?
I...I WANT RANCIDUS TO RESPECT ME. TO VALUE MY FEELINGS AND NEEDS. I WORRY HE DOESN'T. THAT NO ONE DOES. B-BECAUSE, REALLY, WHY SHOULD THEY?

BUB, I WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO ME. LOOK ME IN THE EYE AND REALLY HEAR WHAT I SAY.
I CARE ABOUT YOU. NOT BECAUSE YOU'RE STRONG, OR MEAN, OR YOU FIND CREATIVE WAYS TO CAUSE EXCRUCIATING AGONY.


BUT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE YOU.

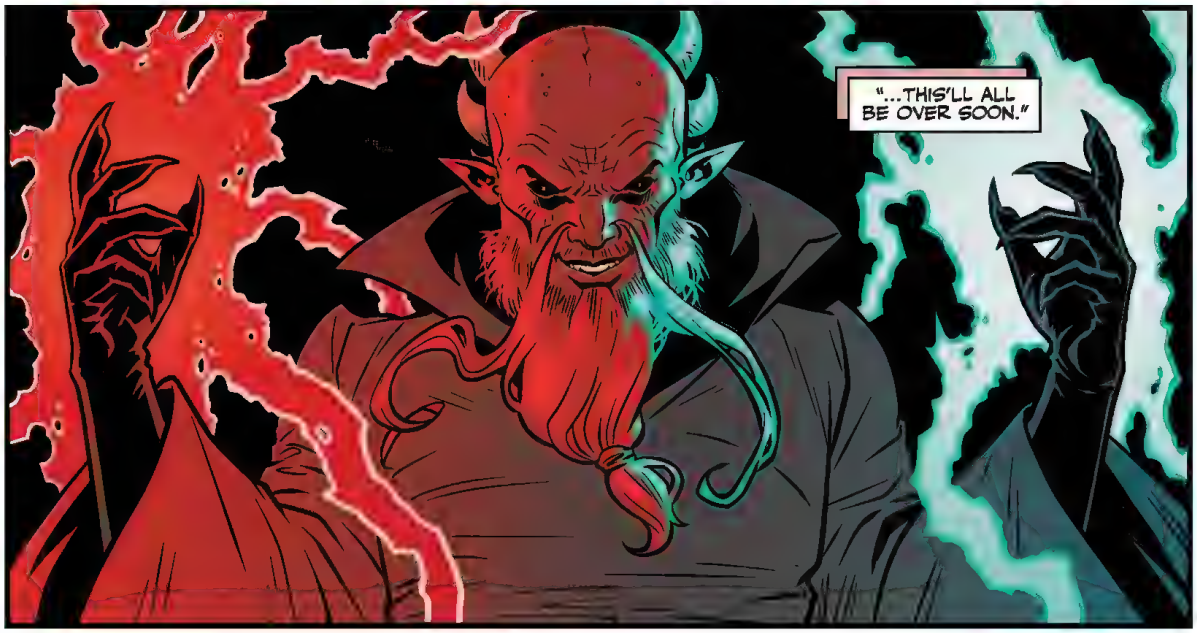

BWWAAAAAA!
NUH-NO ONE'S EVER--I NEVER THOUGHT--I'M SO ASHAMED...
DON'T BE. WHAT YOU JUST DID WAS REALLY BRAVE, AND AMAZING. AND I THINK IT'LL CHANGE YOUR LIFE.
IN FACT, I WANT EVERYONE HERE TO GIVE BUB A HAND IF YOU THINK WHAT HE DID IS INSPIRING AND COURAGEOUS.
WE HAD A BREAKTHROUGH HERE TODAY. DOES ANYONE ELSE WANT TO SHARE?
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
WE NEED TO WORK ON THE HOUSES...
THE BIGGEST, MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSE IN THE WORLD MEANS NOTHING IF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN IT HAVEN'T RENOVATED THEMSELVES. NOW COME ON, WHO'S NEXT?
W-WHEN I HATCHED, MY SPAWN MOTHER SAID I WAS THE LEAST VICIOUS OF THE ENTIRE BROOD, AND SHE HOPED MY BROTHERS WOULD FILLET ME.
HEY, WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE, AM I RIGHT?


SAN FRANCISCO.
BUFFY?
I CALLED A MEETING OF THE MAGIC COUNCIL. TO DISCUSS OUR FINAL TRIES AT REACHING XANDER AND DAWN, AND WHAT WE'LL PUT IN THE BOOK IF THEY DON'T WORK.
FINE. GOOD. LET ME KNOW WHEN THEY GET HERE.
LOOK... YOU KNOW HOW THE COUNCIL CAN BE. I REALIZE THINGS HAVE BEEN...TENSE LATELY.
BUT IT'S IMPORTANT WE PRESENT A UNITED FRONT. AND THAT WE LOOK LIKE WE HAVE OUR ACT TOGETHER.
I KNOW. AND IT TAKES TIME TO PUT MY GAME FACE ON WHEN ALL I WANT TO DO IS CURL UP INTO A BALL.
SO LIKE I SAID. CALL ME WHEN THEY GET HERE.
SHOULDN'T BE LONG.

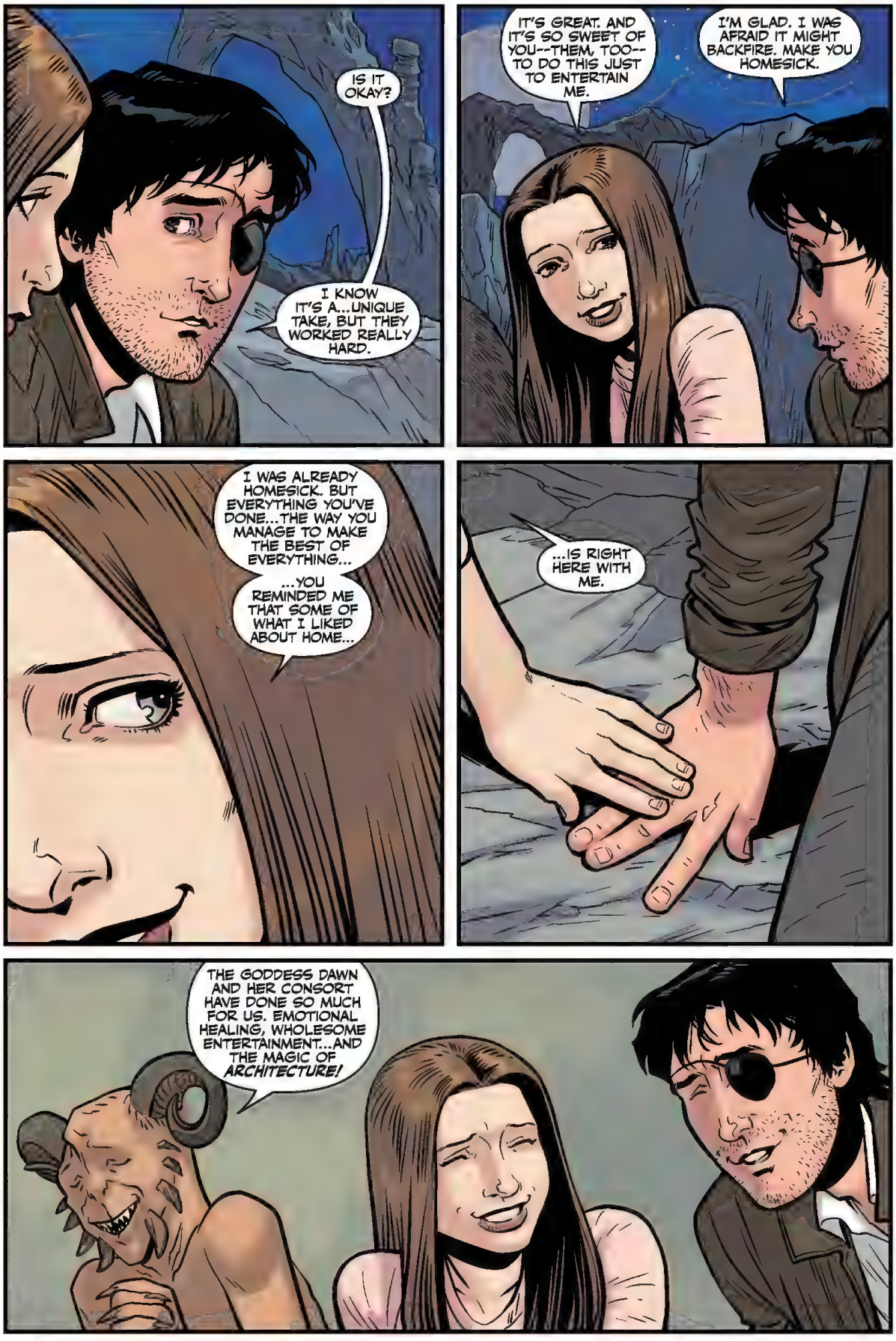
"D'HOFFRYN'S GOING TO TALK TO THEM NOW.
"HE'S VISITING THEM ALL PERSONALLY, ONE ON ONE...
"...GOING TO THEIR DIMENSIONS IF HE HAS TO...

"...TO IMPRESS UPON THEM HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS.
"SO HOPEFULLY, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER..."

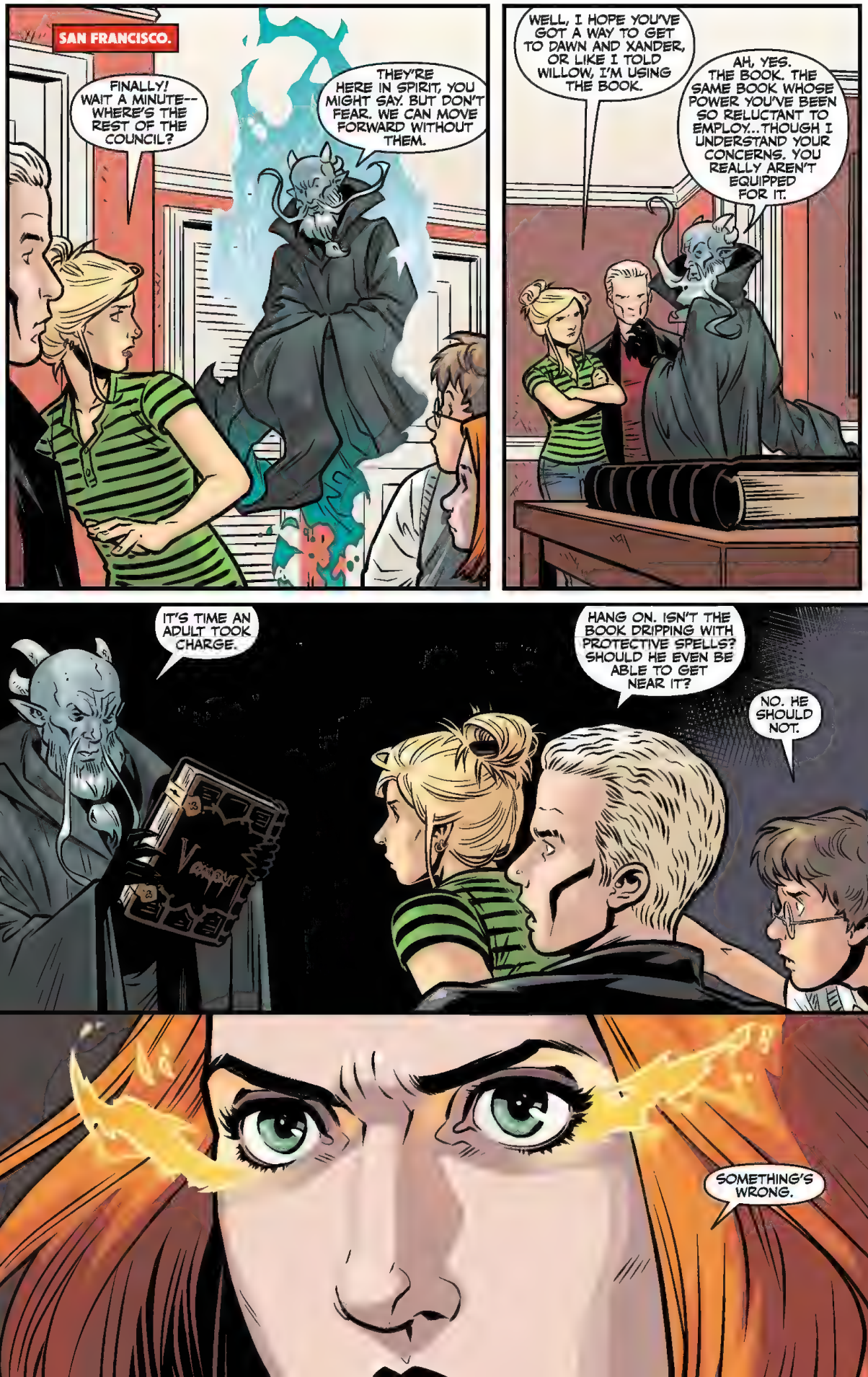
IMPOSSIBLE! YOU HAVE NO WEAKNESSES-- AIIEEE!

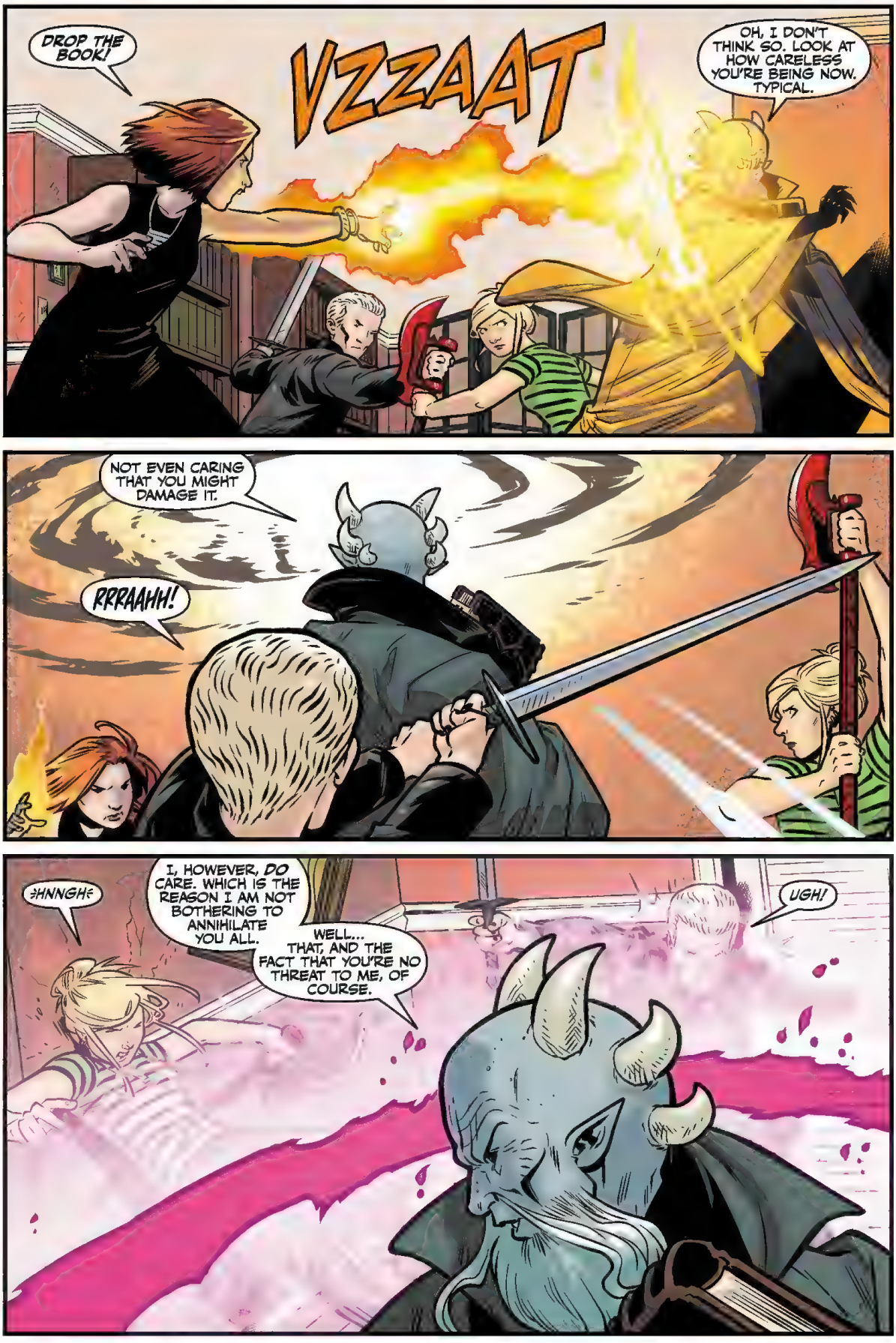

"...THIS'LL ALL BE OVER SOON."

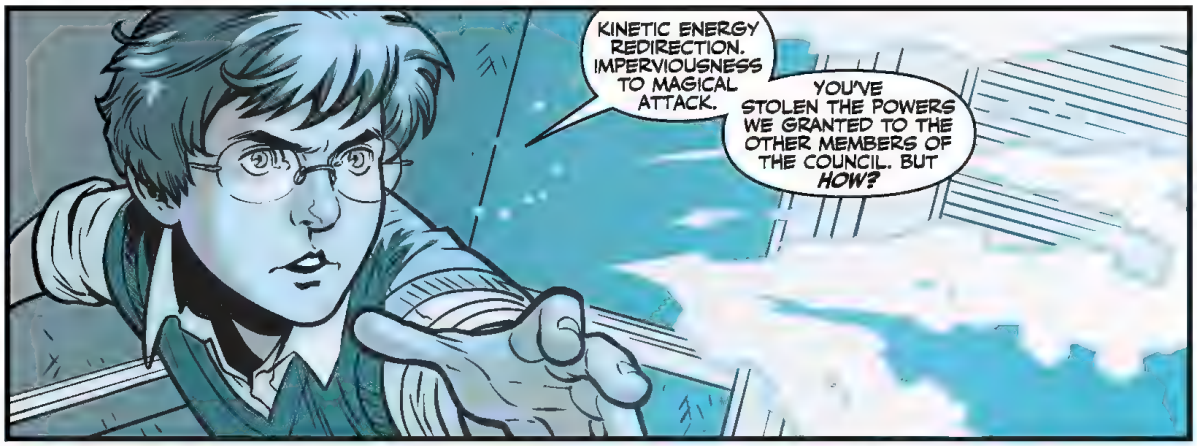
ANHARRA.
BUTTERCUP CAME TO REALIZE THAT WHAT WESTLEY REALLY MEANT WAS...
..."I LOVE YOU."
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS EPIC?
THE PRINCESS BRIDE.
ONE OF MY VERY FAVORITES.

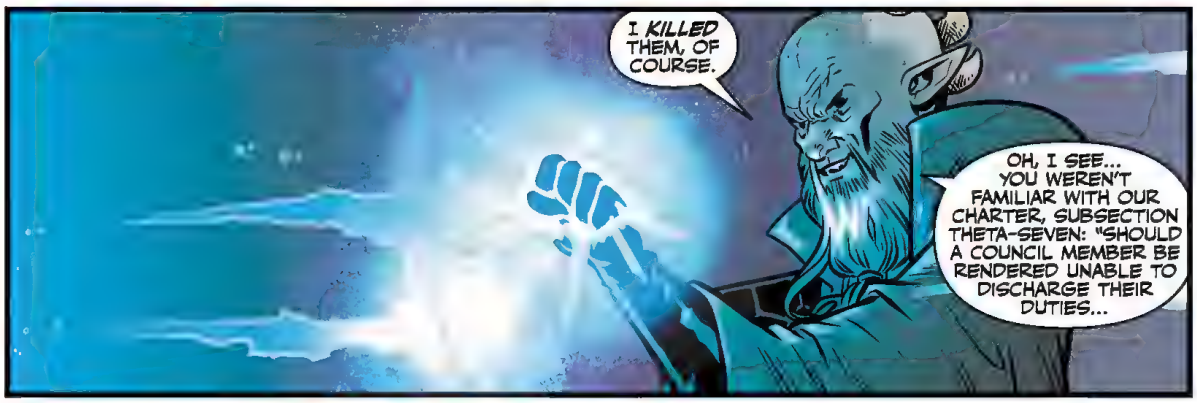

IS IT OKAY?
I KNOW IT'S A...UNIQUE TAKE, BUT THEY WORKED REALLY HARD.
IT'S GREAT. AND IT'S SO SWEET OF YOU--THEM, TOO--TO DO THIS JUST TO ENTERTAIN ME.
I'M GLAD. I WAS AFRAID IT MIGHT BACKFIRE. MAKE YOU HOMESICK.
I WAS ALREADY HOMESICK. BUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE...THE WAY YOU MANAGE TO MAKE THE BEST OF EVERYTHING...
...YOU REMINDED ME THAT SOME OF WHAT I LIKED ABOUT HOME...
...IS RIGHT HERE WITH ME.
THE GODDESS DAWN AND HER CONSORT HAVE DONE SO MUCH FOR US. EMOTIONAL HEALING, WHOLESOME ENTERTAINMENT...AND THE MAGIC OF *ARCHITECTURE!*

THE *OTHER* OUTSIDERS NEVER SHARED THEIR SECRETS, THOUGH THEY HAVE COMFORTS FAR BEYOND OURS.
THERE ARE OTHER OUTSIDERS THERE? AS IN, FROM *SOMEWHERE ELSE?* XANDER, MAYBE THEY CAN HELP US GET HOME! OR AT LEAST HELP BUFFY FIND US!
THE GODDESS DAWN MAY SPEAK WITH THEM IF SHE WISHES, BUT I ADVISE AGAINST IT. WE AVOID THEM. DREADFUL, SPITEFUL, HATEFUL CREATURES. I BELIEVE THEY'RE CALLED...
...LAWYERS.
TRANSLATION: WOLFRAM & HART, ATTORNEYS AT LAW.
THIS IS GLBB, IN THE ANHARRAN OFFICE... NO, *ANHARRA.* I ASSURE YOU, WE EXIST, ALL RIGHT? LOOK IT UP. ELITIST JERK.
JUST PUT ME THROUGH TO THE SENIOR PARTNERS. I HAVE SOMETHING I GUARANTEE THEY'LL WANT TO KNOW ABOUT...


SAN FRANCISCO.
FINALLY! WAIT A MINUTE-- WHERE'S THE REST OF THE COUNCIL?
THEY'RE HERE IN SPIRIT, YOU MIGHT SAY. BUT DON'T FEAR. WE CAN MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT THEM.
WELL, I HOPE YOU'VE GOT A WAY TO GET TO DAWN AND XANDER, OR LIKE I TOLD WILLOW, I'M USING THE BOOK.
AH, YES. THE BOOK. THE SAME BOOK WHOSE POWER YOU'VE BEEN SO RELUCTANT TO EMPLOY...THOUGH I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERNS. YOU REALLY AREN'T EQUIPPED FOR IT.
IT'S TIME AN ADULT TOOK CHARGE.
HANG ON. ISN'T THE BOOK DRIPPING WITH PROTECTIVE SPELLS? SHOULD HE EVEN BE ABLE TO GET NEAR IT?
NO. HE SHOULD NOT.
SOMETHING'S WRONG.

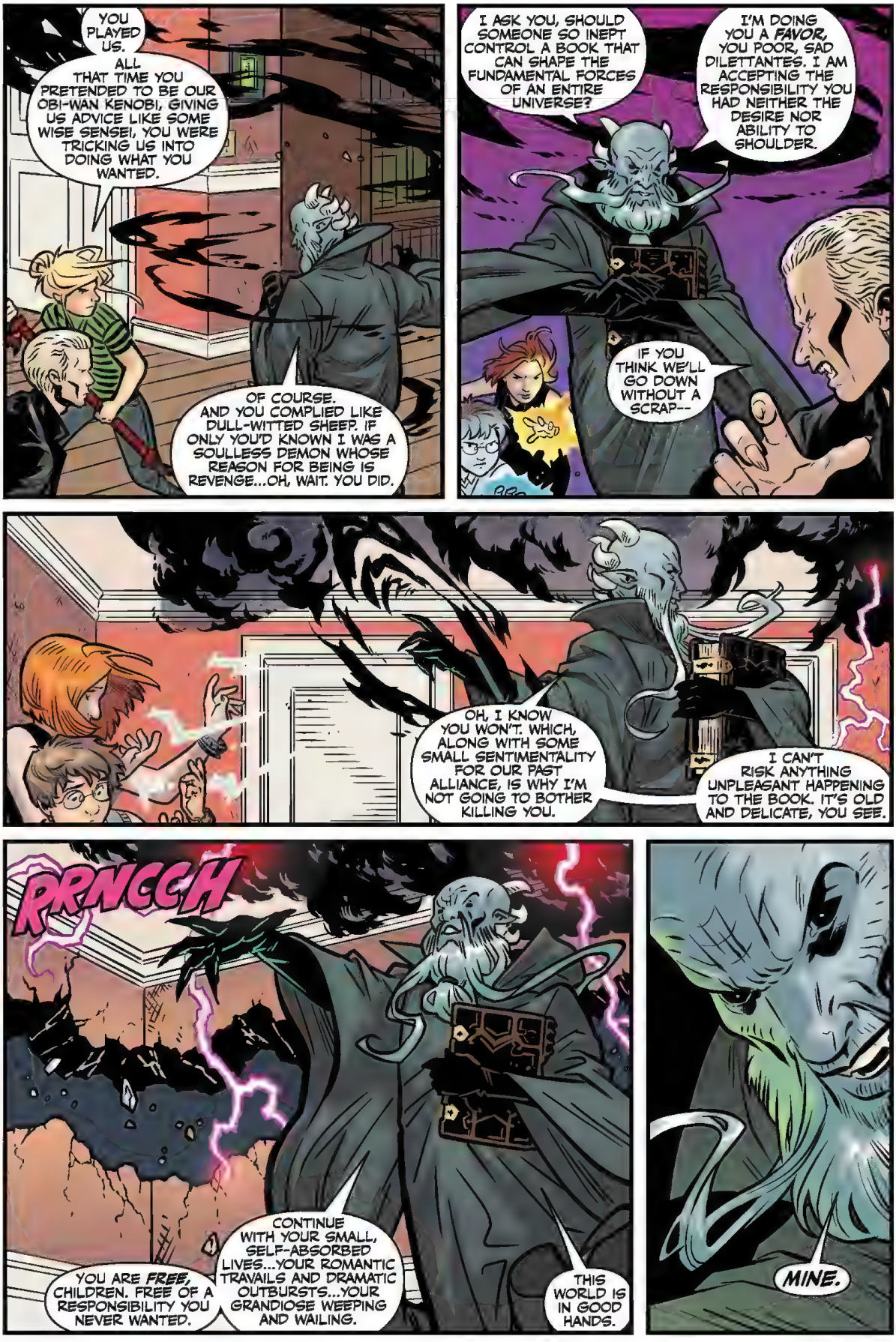

DROP THE BOOK!
VZZAAT
OH, I DON'T THINK SO. LOOK AT HOW CARELESS YOU'RE BEING NOW. TYPICAL.
NOT EVEN CARING THAT YOU MIGHT DAMAGE IT.
RRRAAHH!
I, HOWEVER, DO CARE. WHICH IS THE REASON I AM NOT BOTHERING TO ANNIHILATE YOU ALL.
WELL... THAT, AND THE FACT THAT YOU'RE NO THREAT TO ME, OF COURSE.
HNNGH
UGH!

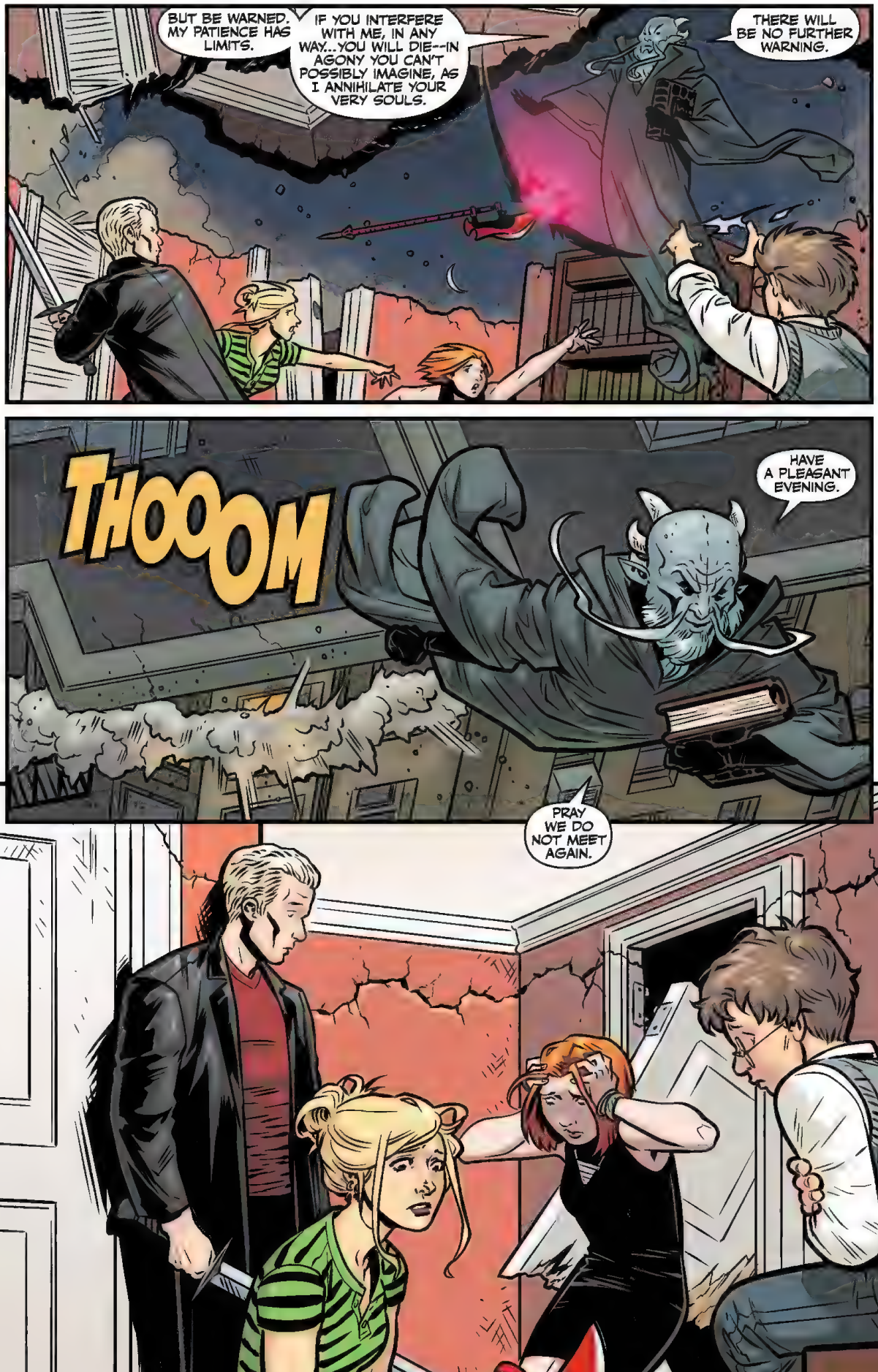

KINETIC ENERGY REDIRECTION. IMPERVIOUSNESS TO MAGICAL ATTACK.
YOU'VE STOLEN THE POWERS WE GRANTED TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL. BUT *HOW?*

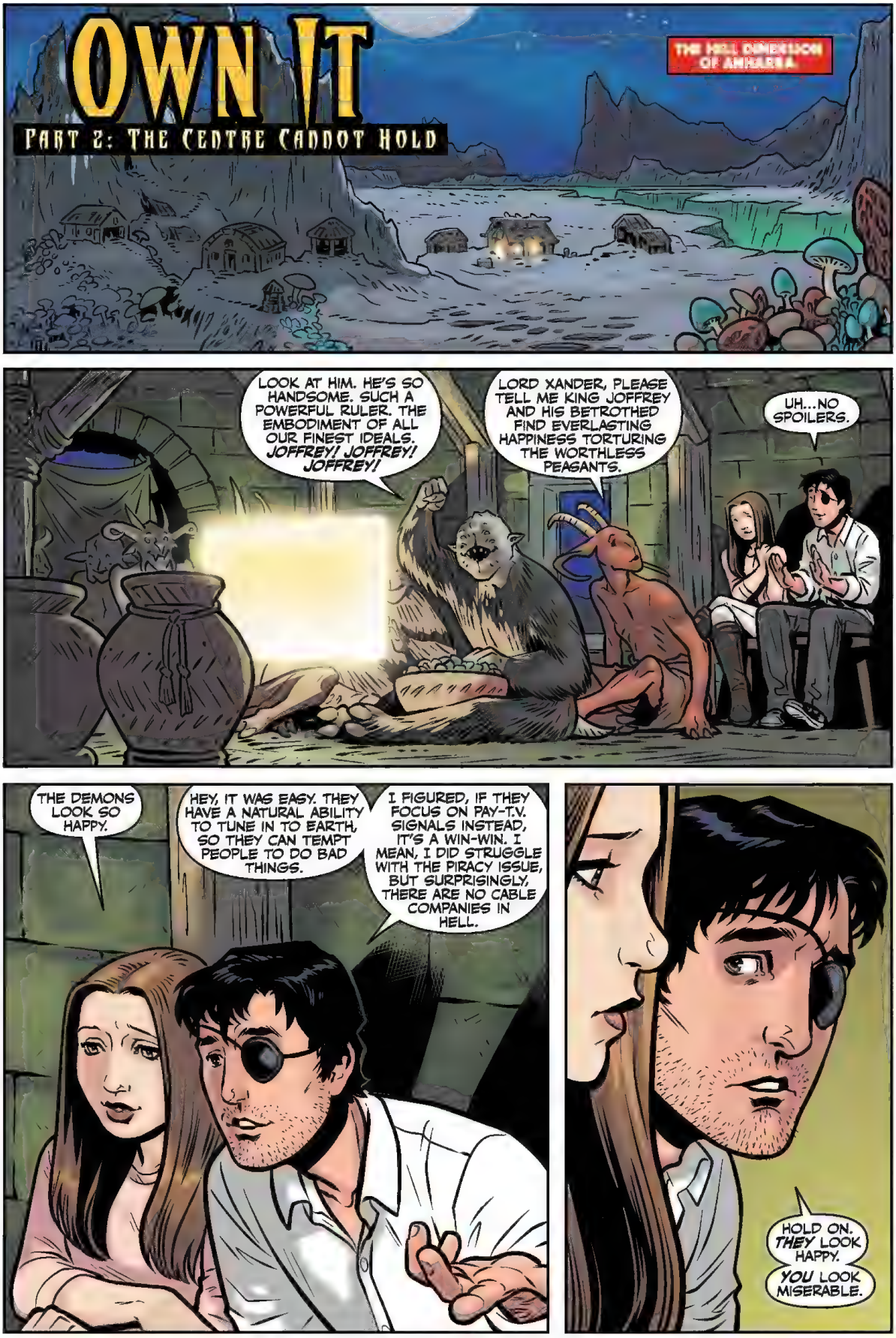

I *KILLED* THEM, OF COURSE.
OH, I SEE... YOU WEREN'T FAMILIAR WITH OUR CHARTER, SUBSECTION THETA-SEVEN: "SHOULD A COUNCIL MEMBER BE RENDERED UNABLE TO DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES...

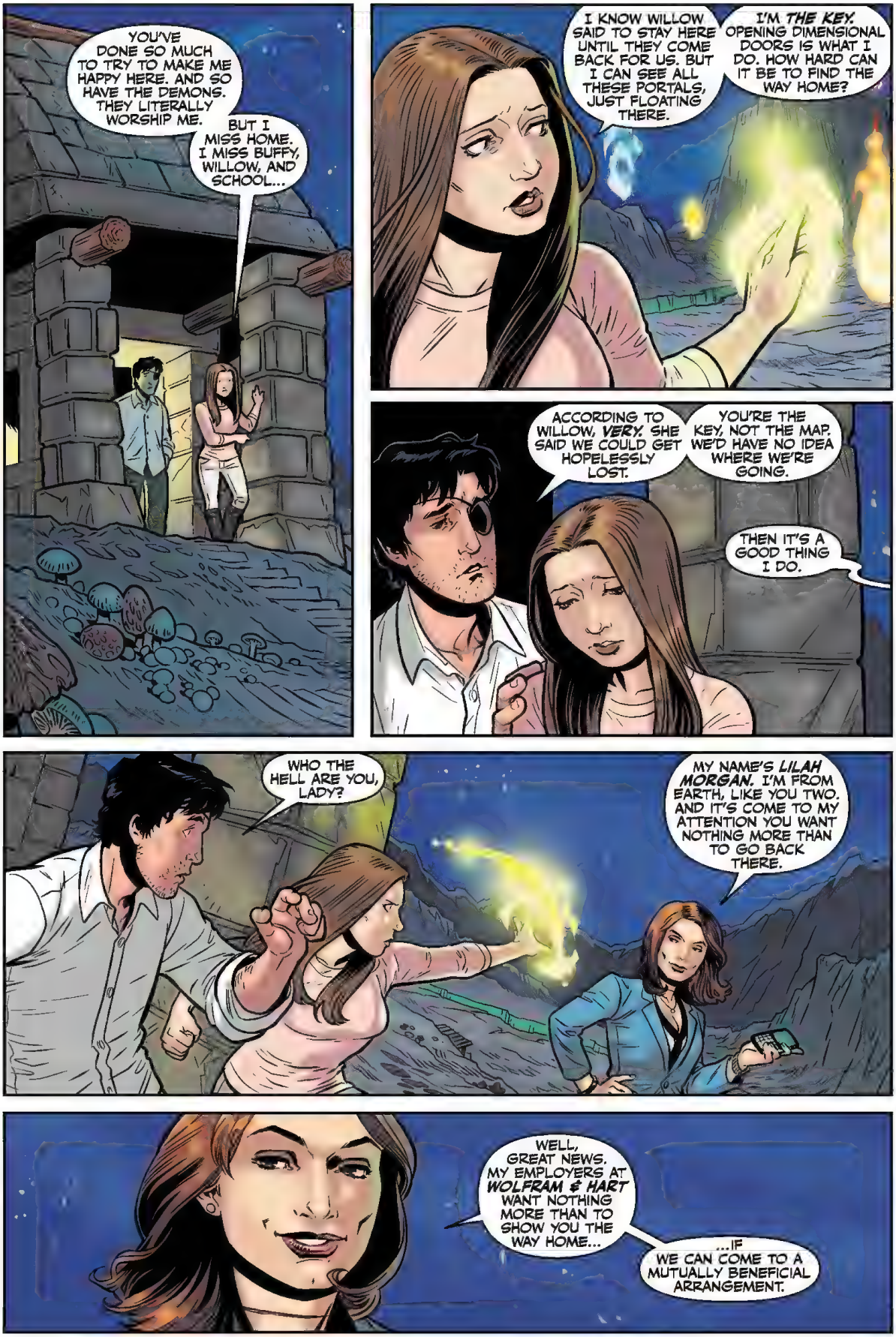
"...THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THEIR OFFICE SHALL BE EQUALLY DIVIDED AMONG THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNTIL A REPLACEMENT MAY BE NAMED."
I AM CURRENTLY THE ONLY SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL.

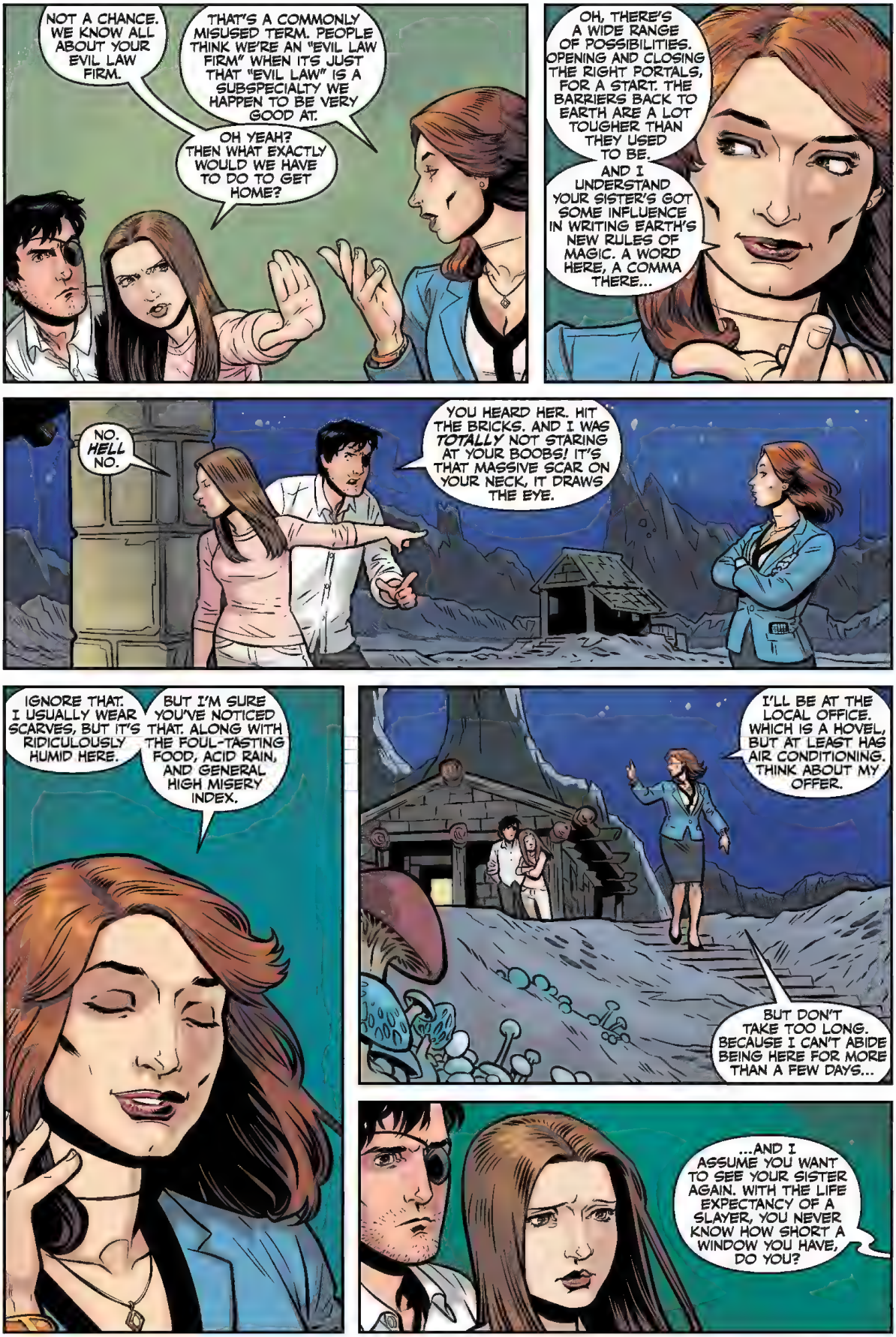
THEREFORE ALL DUTIES... AND *POWERS*... FALL TO ME.
YOU CANNOT HURT ME, CHILDREN.
I HIGHLY DOUBT ANYTHING CAN.

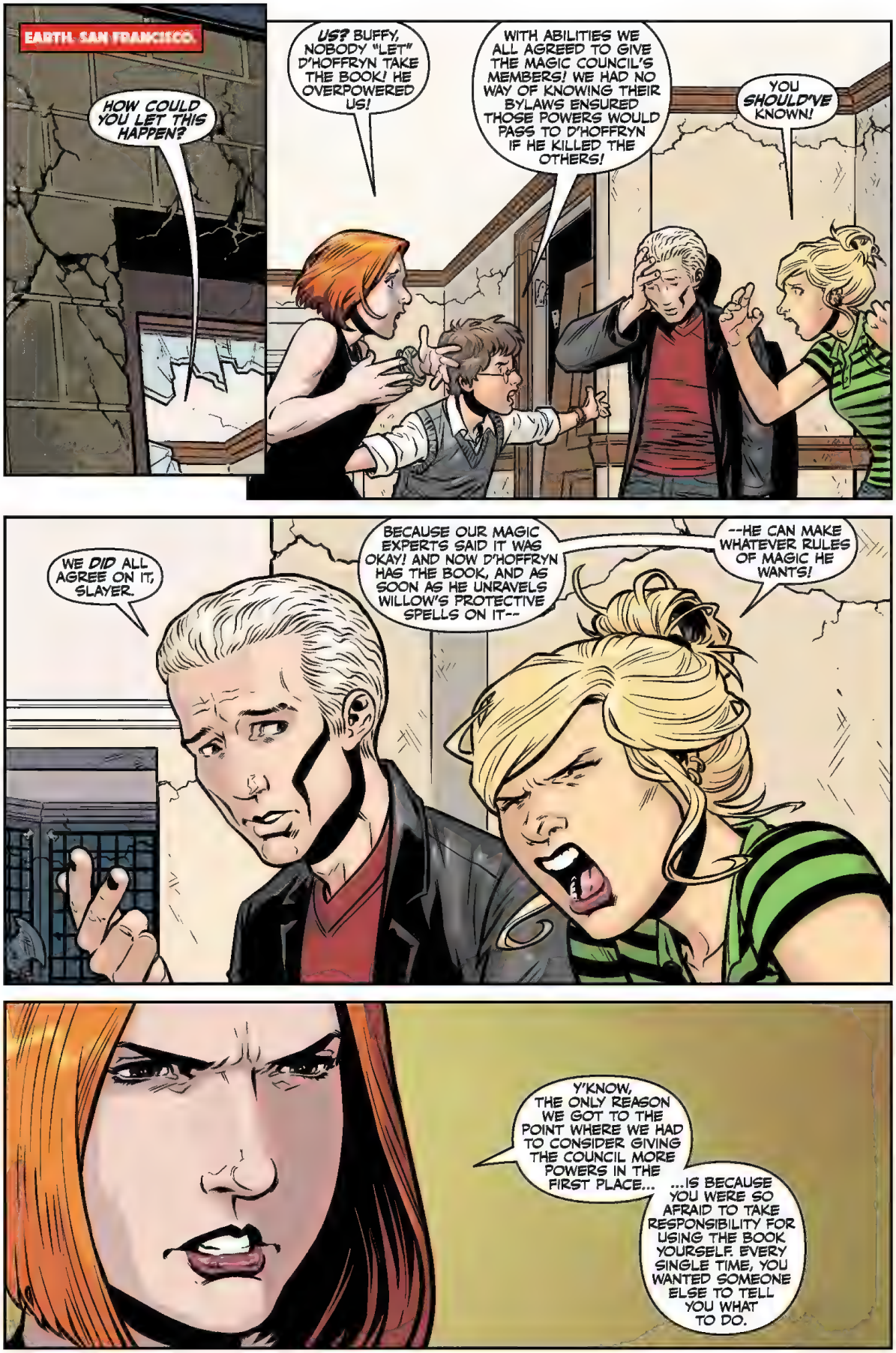

YOU PLAYED US. ALL THAT TIME YOU PRETENDED TO BE OUR OBI-WAN KENOBI, GIVING US ADVICE LIKE SOME WISE SENSEI, YOU WERE TRICKING US INTO DOING WHAT YOU WANTED.
OF COURSE. AND YOU COMPLIED LIKE DULL-WITTED SHEEP. IF ONLY YOU'D KNOWN I WAS A SOULLESS DEMON WHOSE REASON FOR BEING IS REVENGE...OH, WAIT. YOU DID.
I ASK YOU, SHOULD SOMEONE SO INEPT CONTROL A BOOK THAT CAN SHAPE THE FUNDAMENTAL FORCES OF AN ENTIRE UNIVERSE?
I'M DOING YOU A *FAVOR*, YOU POOR, SAD DILETTANTES. I AM ACCEPTING THE RESPONSIBILITY YOU HAD NEITHER THE DESIRE NOR ABILITY TO SHOULDER.
IF YOU THINK WE'LL GO DOWN WITHOUT A SCRAP--
OH, I KNOW YOU WON'T. WHICH, ALONG WITH SOME SMALL SENTIMENTALITY FOR OUR PAST ALLIANCE, IS WHY I'M NOT GOING TO BOTHER KILLING YOU.
I CAN'T RISK ANYTHING UNPLEASANT HAPPENING TO THE BOOK. IT'S OLD AND DELICATE, YOU SEE.
RRNCCH
YOU ARE *FREE*, CHILDREN. FREE OF A RESPONSIBILITY YOU NEVER WANTED.
CONTINUE WITH YOUR SMALL, SELF-ABSORBED LIVES...YOUR ROMANTIC TRAVAILS AND DRAMATIC OUTBURSTS...YOUR GRANDIOSE WEEPING AND WAILING.
THIS WORLD IS IN GOOD HANDS.
MINE.

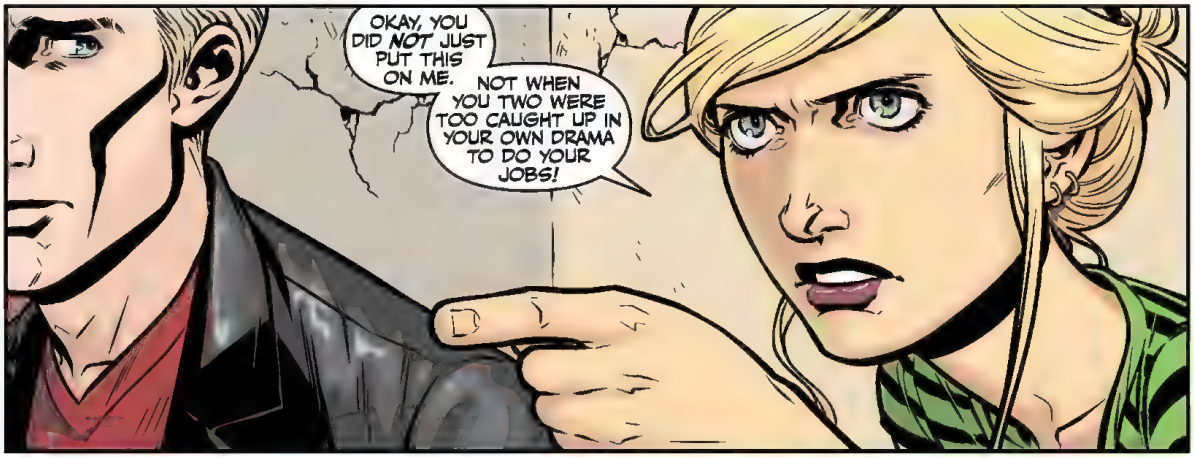

BUT BE WARNED. MY PATIENCE HAS LIMITS.
IF YOU INTERFERE WITH ME, IN ANY WAY...YOU WILL DIE--IN AGONY YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY IMAGINE, AS I ANNIHILATE YOUR VERY SOULS.
THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER WARNING.
THOOOM
HAVE A PLEASANT EVENING.
PRAY WE DO NOT MEET AGAIN.


OWN IT
PART 2: THE CENTRE CANNOT HOLD
THE HELL DIMENSION OF AMHARRA
LOOK AT HIM. HE'S SO HANDSOME. SUCH A POWERFUL RULER. THE EMBODIMENT OF ALL OUR FINEST IDEALS. JOFFREY! JOFFREY! JOFFREY!
LORD XANDER, PLEASE TELL ME KING JOFFREY AND HIS BETROTHED FIND EVERLASTING HAPPINESS TORTURING THE WORTHLESS PEASANTS.
UH...NO SPOILERS.
THE DEMONS LOOK SO HAPPY.
HEY, IT WAS EASY. THEY HAVE A NATURAL ABILITY TO TUNE IN TO EARTH, SO THEY CAN TEMPT PEOPLE TO DO BAD THINGS.
I FIGURED, IF THEY FOCUS ON PAY-T.V. SIGNALS INSTEAD, IT'S A WIN-WIN. I MEAN, I DID STRUGGLE WITH THE PIRACY ISSUE, BUT SURPRISINGLY, THERE ARE NO CABLE COMPANIES IN HELL.
HOLD ON. THEY LOOK HAPPY.
YOU LOOK MISERABLE.


YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH TO TRY TO MAKE ME HAPPY HERE. AND SO HAVE THE DEMONS. THEY LITERALLY WORSHIP ME.
BUT I MISS HOME. I MISS BUFFY, WILLOW, AND SCHOOL...
I KNOW WILLOW SAID TO STAY HERE UNTIL THEY COME BACK FOR US. BUT I CAN SEE ALL THESE PORTALS, JUST FLOATING THERE.
I'M *THE KEY.* OPENING DIMENSIONAL DOORS IS WHAT I DO. HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO FIND THE WAY HOME?
ACCORDING TO WILLOW, *VERY.* SHE SAID WE COULD GET HOPELESSLY LOST.
YOU'RE THE KEY, NOT THE MAP. WE'D HAVE NO IDEA WHERE WE'RE GOING.
THEN IT'S A GOOD THING I DO.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, LADY?
MY NAME'S *LILAH MORGAN.* I'M FROM EARTH, LIKE YOU TWO. AND IT'S COME TO MY ATTENTION YOU WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO GO BACK THERE.
WELL, GREAT NEWS. MY EMPLOYERS AT *WOLFRAM & HART* WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO SHOW YOU THE WAY HOME...
...IF WE CAN COME TO A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ARRANGEMENT.

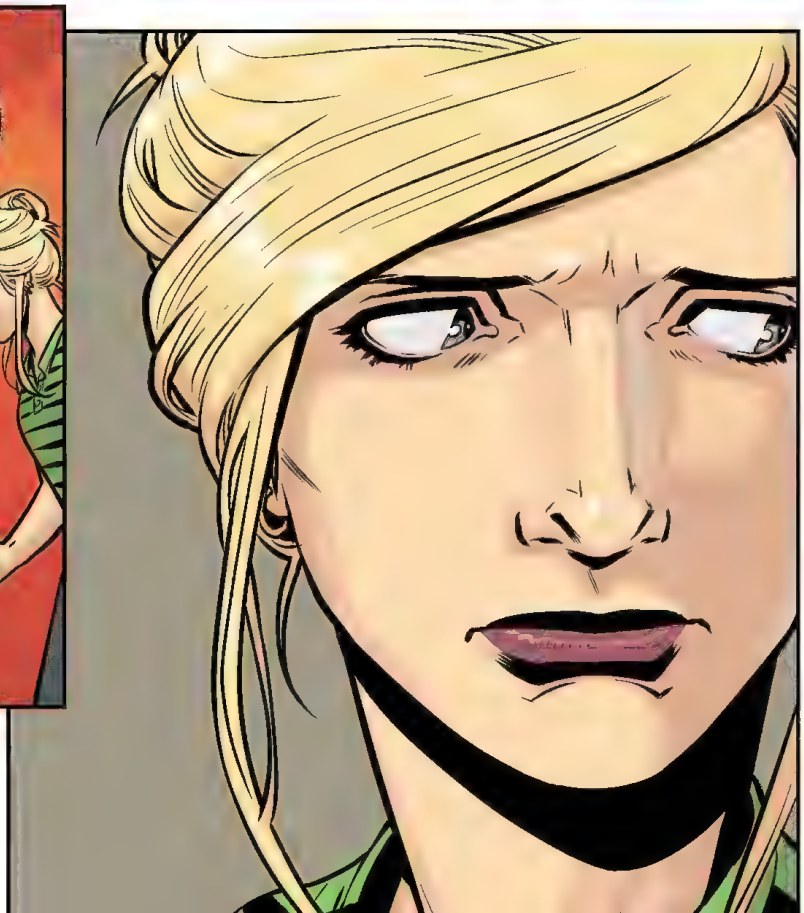

NOT A CHANCE. WE KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR EVIL LAW FIRM.
THAT'S A COMMONLY MISUSED TERM. PEOPLE THINK WE'RE AN "EVIL LAW FIRM" WHEN ITS JUST THAT "EVIL LAW" IS A SUBSPECIALTY WE HAPPEN TO BE VERY GOOD AT.
OH YEAH? THEN WHAT EXACTLY WOULD WE HAVE TO DO TO GET HOME?
OH, THERE'S A WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES. OPENING AND CLOSING THE RIGHT PORTALS, FOR A START. THE BARRIERS BACK TO EARTH ARE A LOT TOUGHER THAN THEY USED TO BE.
AND I UNDERSTAND YOUR SISTER'S GOT SOME INFLUENCE IN WRITING EARTH'S NEW RULES OF MAGIC. A WORD HERE, A COMMA THERE...
NO. HELL NO.
YOU HEARD HER. HIT THE BRICKS. AND I WAS TOTALLY NOT STARING AT YOUR BOOBS! IT'S THAT MASSIVE SCAR ON YOUR NECK, IT DRAWS THE EYE.
IGNORE THAT. I USUALLY WEAR SCARVES, BUT IT'S RIDICULOUSLY HUMID HERE.
BUT I'M SURE YOU'VE NOTICED THAT. ALONG WITH THE FOUL-TASTING FOOD, ACID RAIN, AND GENERAL HIGH MISERY INDEX.
I'LL BE AT THE LOCAL OFFICE. WHICH IS A HOVEL, BUT AT LEAST HAS AIR CONDITIONING. THINK ABOUT MY OFFER.
BUT DON'T TAKE TOO LONG. BECAUSE I CAN'T ABIDE BEING HERE FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS...
...AND I ASSUME YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR SISTER AGAIN. WITH THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF A SLAYER, YOU NEVER KNOW HOW SHORT A WINDOW YOU HAVE, DO YOU?


EARTH. SAN FRANCISCO.
HOW COULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN?
US? BUFFY, NOBODY "LET" D'HOFFRYN TAKE THE BOOK! HE OVERPOWERED US!
WITH ABILITIES WE ALL AGREED TO GIVE THE MAGIC COUNCIL'S MEMBERS! WE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THEIR BYLAWS ENSURED THOSE POWERS WOULD PASS TO D'HOFFRYN IF HE KILLED THE OTHERS!
YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN!
WE DID ALL AGREE ON IT, SLAYER.
BECAUSE OUR MAGIC EXPERTS SAID IT WAS OKAY! AND NOW D'HOFFRYN HAS THE BOOK, AND AS SOON AS HE UNRAVELS WILLOW'S PROTECTIVE SPELLS ON IT--
--HE CAN MAKE WHATEVER RULES OF MAGIC HE WANTS!
Y'KNOW, THE ONLY REASON WE GOT TO THE POINT WHERE WE HAD TO CONSIDER GIVING THE COUNCIL MORE POWERS IN THE FIRST PLACE...
...IS BECAUSE YOU WERE SO AFRAID TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR USING THE BOOK YOURSELF. EVERY SINGLE TIME, YOU WANTED SOMEONE ELSE TO TELL YOU WHAT TO DO.

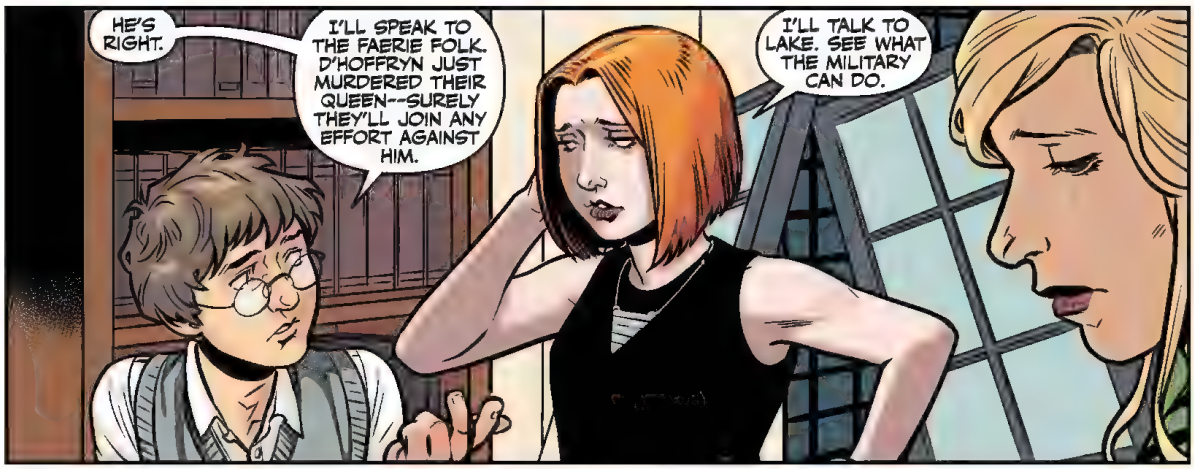

OKAY, YOU DID *NOT* JUST PUT THIS ON ME.
NOT WHEN YOU TWO WERE TOO CAUGHT UP IN YOUR OWN DRAMA TO DO YOUR JOBS!

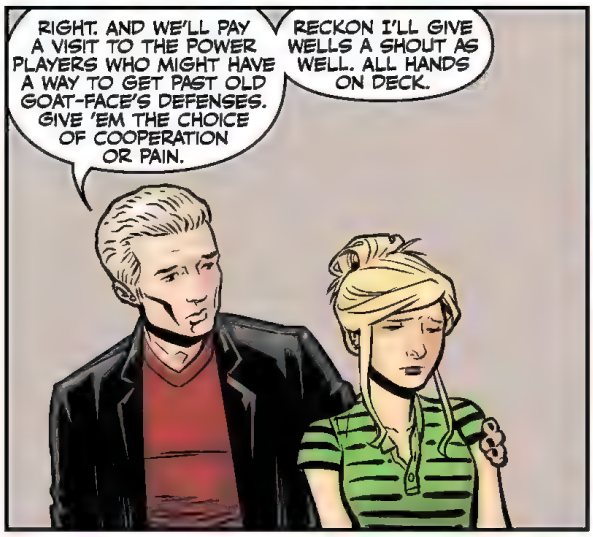
YOU CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BOOK! AND THEN FOUND EVERY EXCUSE IMAGINABLE NOT TO USE IT!
BECAUSE OF THE "MONKEY'S PAW" QUALITIES! THAT *YOU* HARPED ON ABOUT UNTIL I WAS SICK OF EVEN HEARING THE WORDS!

YES. AND THAT CALLED FOR CAUTION.
YOU USED IT AS AN EXCUSE. YET ANOTHER IN A LIFETIME OF REASONS NOT TO GROW UP.



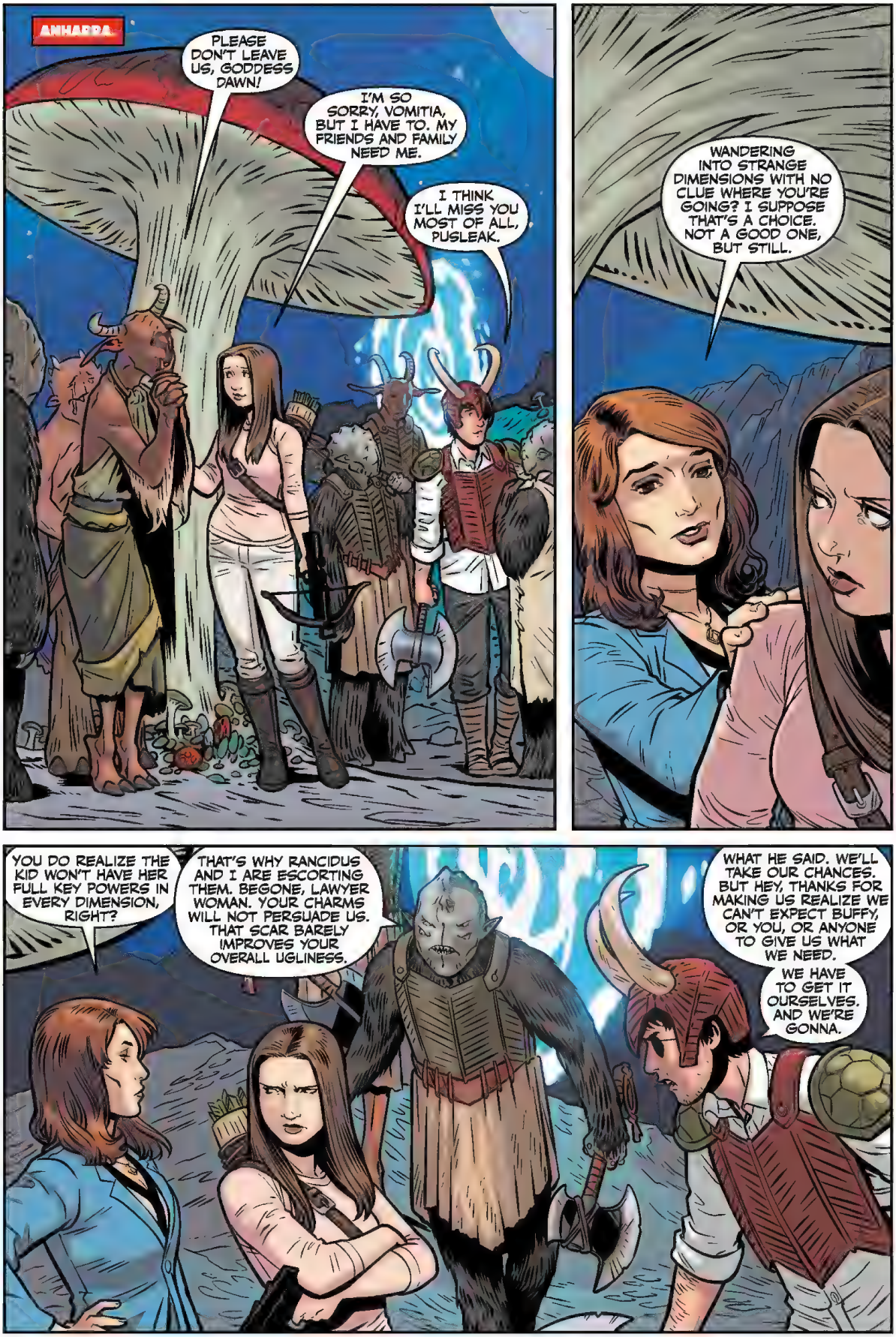
LOOK. THIS IS NO TIME TO BE FIGHTIN' AMONG OURSELVES.
WE DO THAT, WE'VE ALREADY LOST.
IT'LL TAKE D'HOFFRYN TIME TO PEEL AWAY THE BOOK'S MYSTIC WARDS. WE NEED TO USE THAT TIME.


HE'S RIGHT.
I'LL SPEAK TO THE FAERIE FOLK. D'HOFFRYN JUST MURDERED THEIR QUEEN--SURELY THEY'LL JOIN ANY EFFORT AGAINST HIM.
I'LL TALK TO LAKE. SEE WHAT THE MILITARY CAN DO.

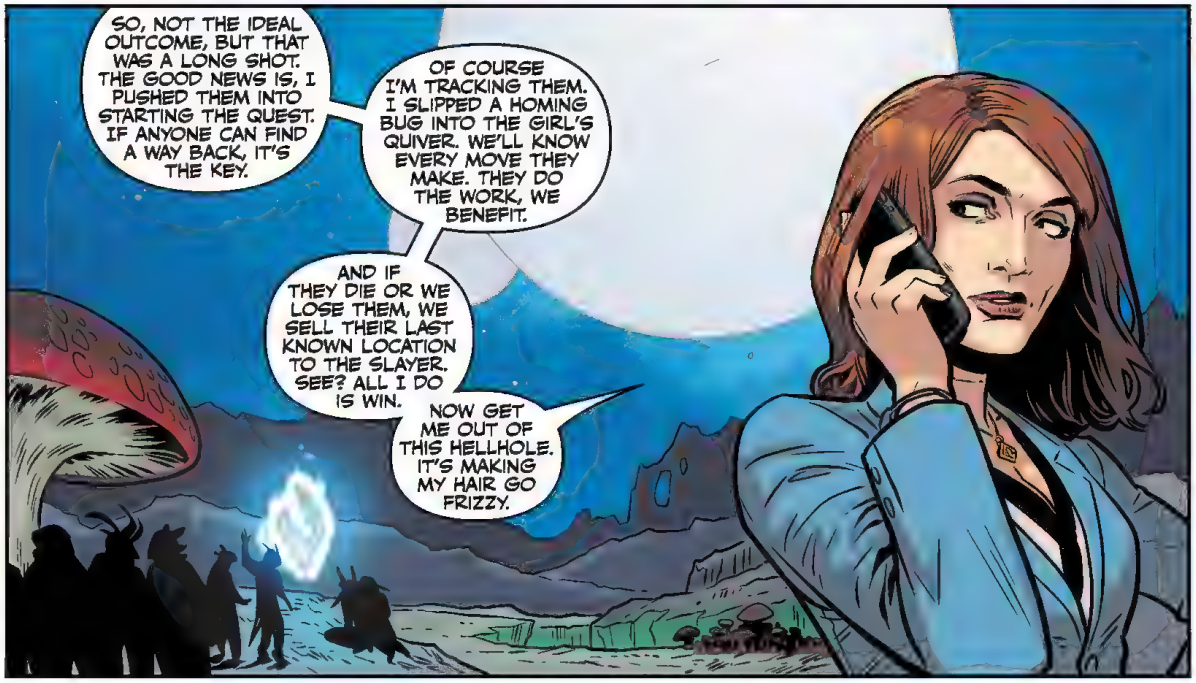

RIGHT. AND WE'LL PAY A VISIT TO THE POWER PLAYERS WHO MIGHT HAVE A WAY TO GET PAST OLD GOAT-FACE'S DEFENSES. GIVE 'EM THE CHOICE OF COOPERATION OR PAIN.
RECKON I'LL GIVE WELLS A SHOUT AS WELL. ALL HANDS ON DECK.

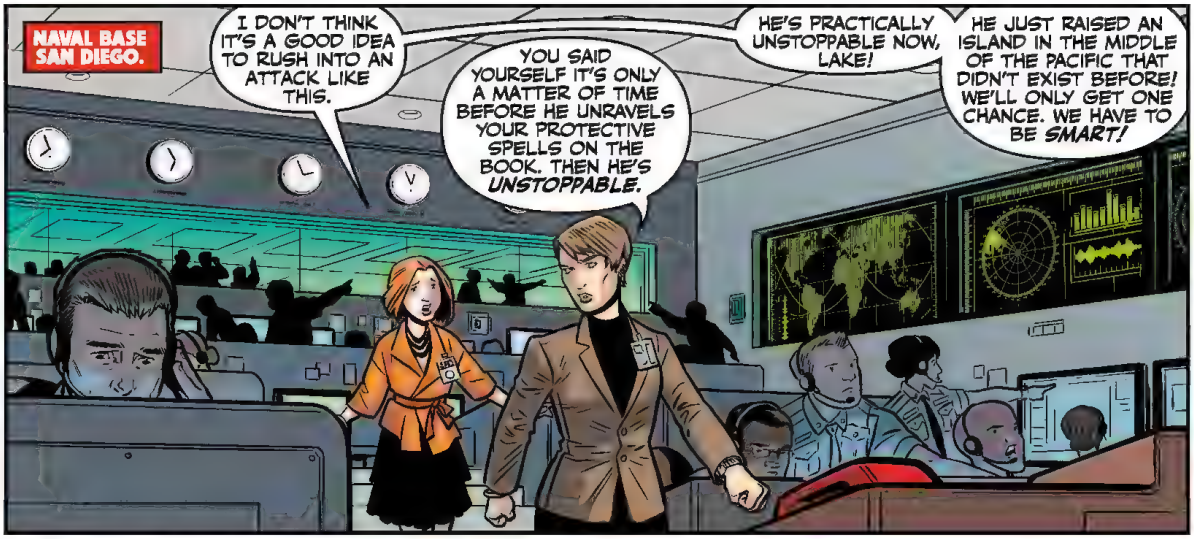
SURE. BUT LET'S BE HONEST...WE'RE WAY PAST BANANA TALKIES AND MINER HELMETS. I DON'T SEE WHAT USE ANDREW'S GOING TO BE.

IT ALL LOOKS PRETTY USELESS RIGHT NOW.

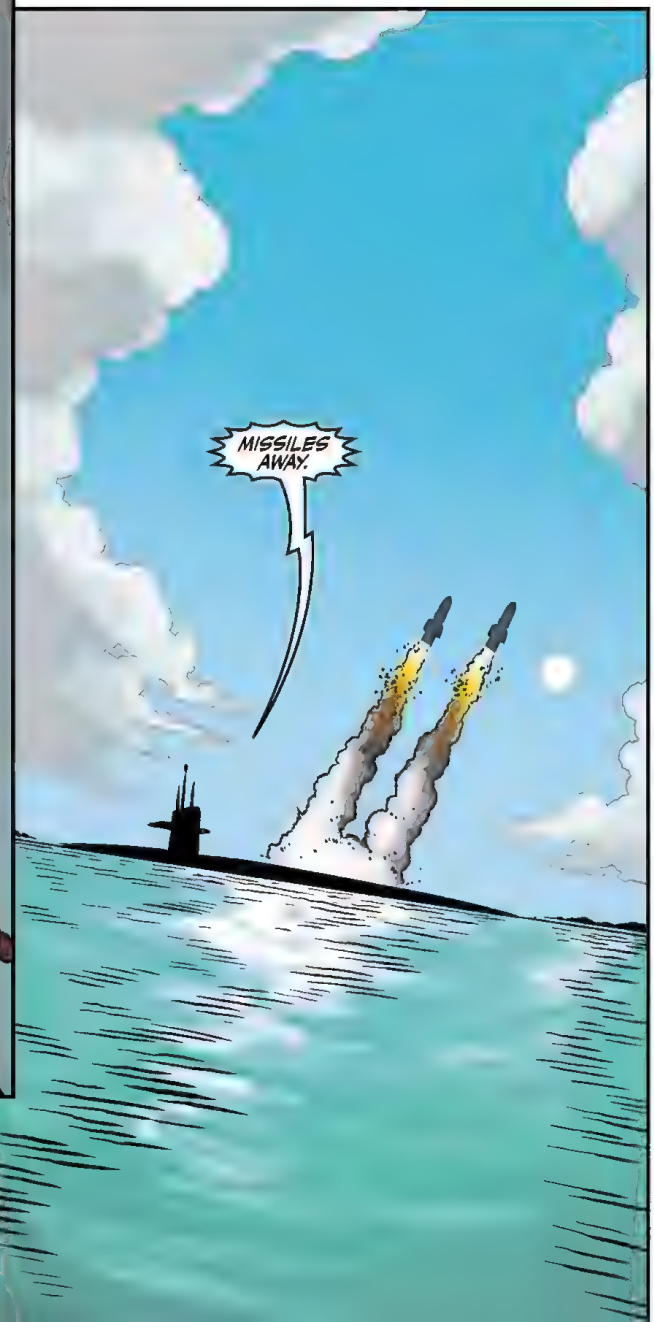

ANHARRA
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE US, GODDESS DAWN!
I'M SO SORRY, VOMITIA, BUT I HAVE TO. MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY NEED ME.
I THINK I'LL MISS YOU MOST OF ALL, PUSLEAK.
WANDERING INTO STRANGE DIMENSIONS WITH NO CLUE WHERE YOU'RE GOING? I SUPPOSE THAT'S A CHOICE. NOT A GOOD ONE, BUT STILL.
YOU DO REALIZE THE KID WON'T HAVE HER FULL KEY POWERS IN EVERY DIMENSION, RIGHT?
THAT'S WHY RANCIDUS AND I ARE ESCORTING THEM. BEGONE, LAWYER WOMAN. YOUR CHARMS WILL NOT PERSUADE US. THAT SCAR BARELY IMPROVES YOUR OVERALL UGLINESS.
WHAT HE SAID. WE'LL TAKE OUR CHANCES. BUT HEY, THANKS FOR MAKING US REALIZE WE CAN'T EXPECT BUFFY, OR YOU, OR ANYONE TO GIVE US WHAT WE NEED.
WE HAVE TO GET IT OURSELVES. AND WE'RE GONNA.

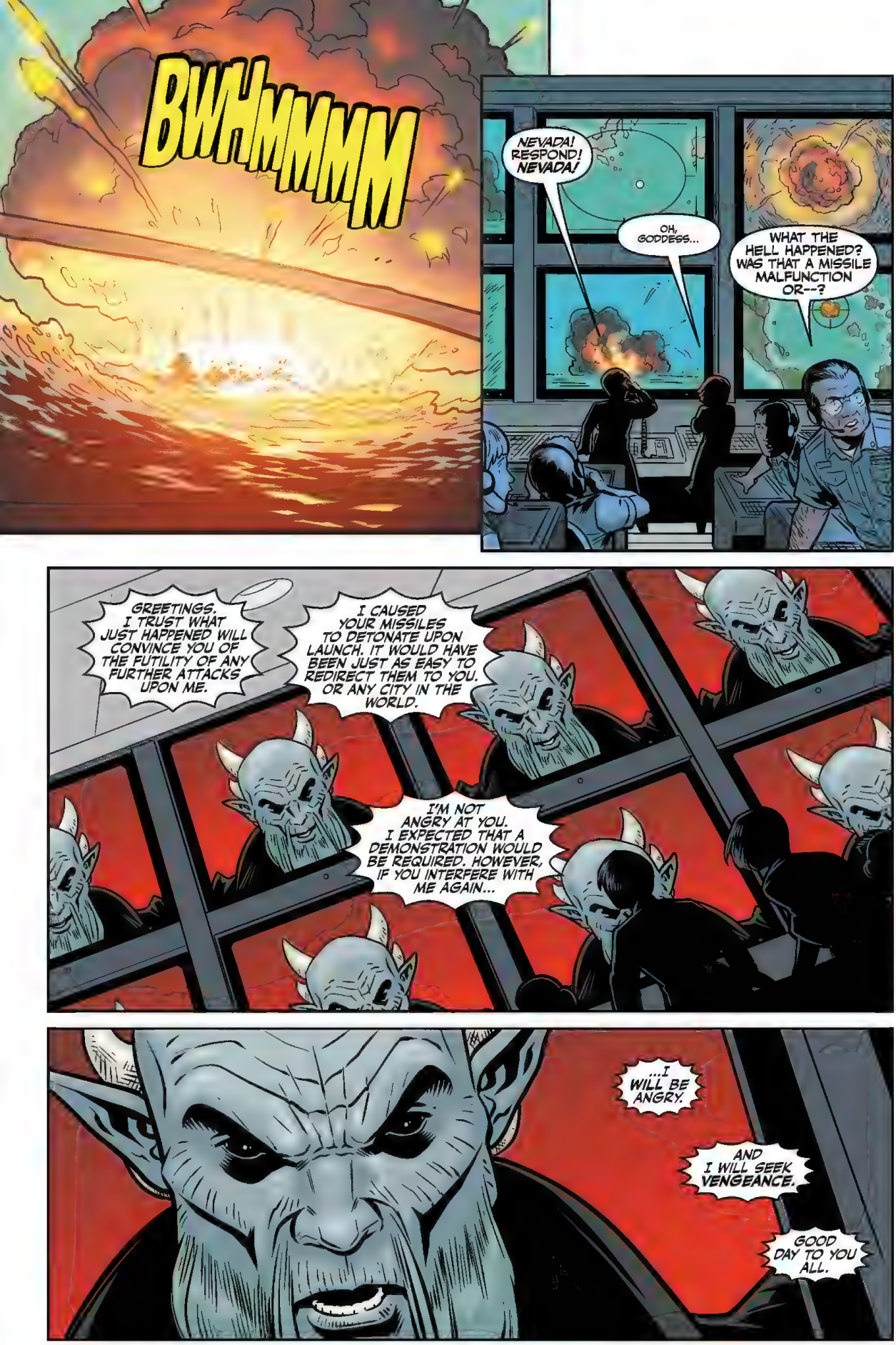
BYE, EVERYONE! I'LL MISS YOU ALL!
OKAY, BIG FIRST STEP. HOW BAD COULD THIS BE...
ANOTHER PORTAL WOULD BE GREAT!
WORKING ON IT!


SO, NOT THE IDEAL OUTCOME, BUT THAT WAS A LONG SHOT. THE GOOD NEWS IS, I PUSHED THEM INTO STARTING THE QUEST. IF ANYONE CAN FIND A WAY BACK, IT'S THE KEY.
OF COURSE I'M TRACKING THEM. I SLIPPED A HOMING BUG INTO THE GIRL'S QUIVER. WE'LL KNOW EVERY MOVE THEY MAKE. THEY DO THE WORK, WE BENEFIT.
AND IF THEY DIE OR WE LOSE THEM, WE SELL THEIR LAST KNOWN LOCATION TO THE SLAYER. SEE? ALL I DO IS WIN.
NOW GET ME OUT OF THIS HELLHOLE. IT'S MAKING MY HAIR GO FRIZZY.


NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO.
I DON'T THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO RUSH INTO AN ATTACK LIKE THIS.
YOU SAID YOURSELF IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE UNRAVELS YOUR PROTECTIVE SPELLS ON THE BOOK. THEN HE'S UNSTOPPABLE.
HE'S PRACTICALLY UNSTOPPABLE NOW, LAKE!
HE JUST RAISED AN ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC THAT DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE! WE'LL ONLY GET ONE CHANCE. WE HAVE TO BE SMART!

I'M SORRY. THE DECISION'S BEEN MADE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.
NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO TO U.S.S. NEVADA. WE ARE GO FOR LAUNCH. STAND BY FOR CODE.

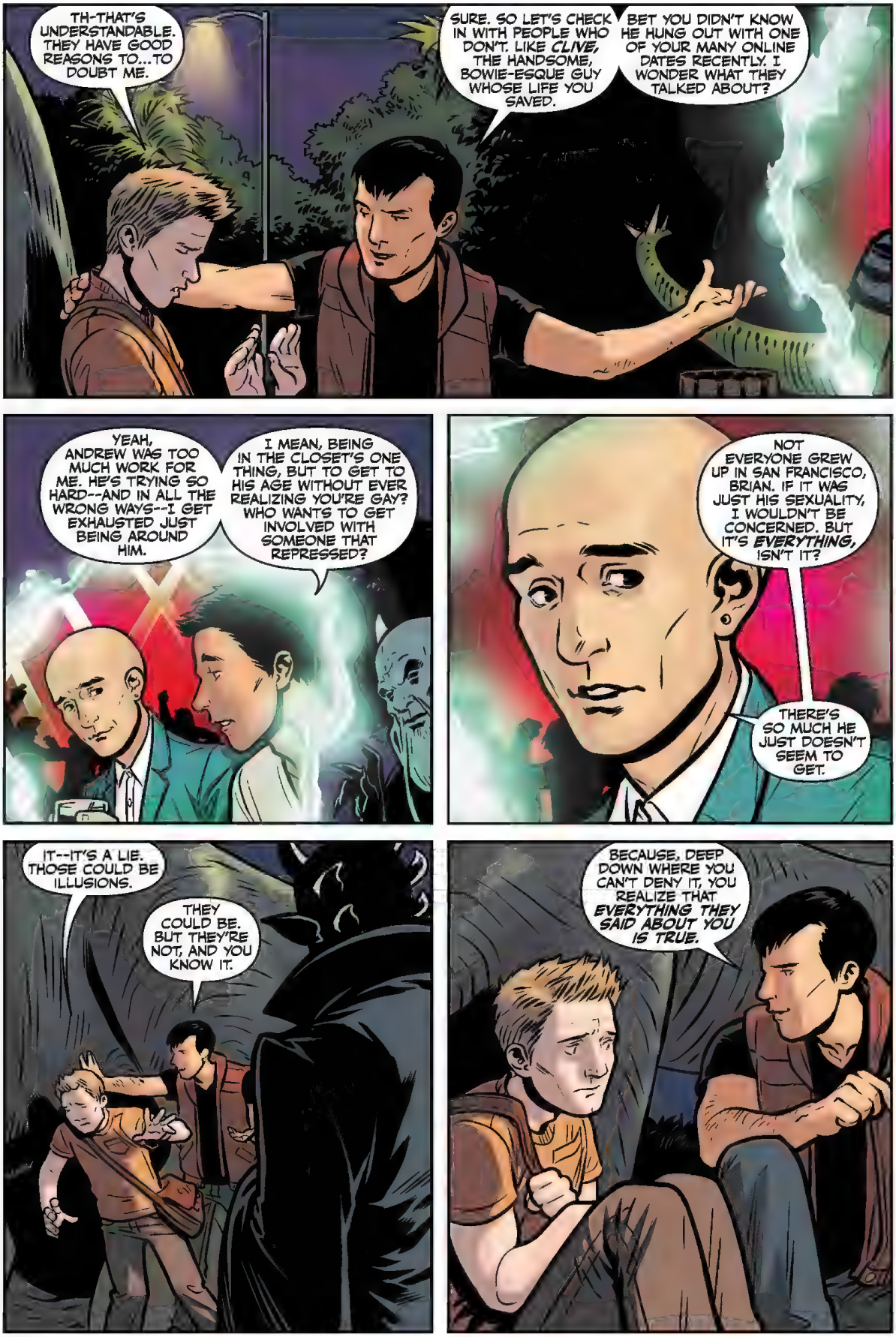

MISSILES AWAY.


BWHMMMM
NEVADA! RESPOND! NEVADA!
OH, GODDESS...
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED? WAS THAT A MISSILE MALFUNCTION OR--?
GREETINGS. I TRUST WHAT JUST HAPPENED WILL CONVINCE YOU OF THE FUTILITY OF ANY FURTHER ATTACKS UPON ME.
I CAUSED YOUR MISSILES TO DETONATE UPON LAUNCH. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST AS EASY TO REDIRECT THEM TO YOU. OR ANY CITY IN THE WORLD.
I'M NOT ANGRY AT YOU. I EXPECTED THAT A DEMONSTRATION WOULD BE REQUIRED. HOWEVER, IF YOU INTERFERE WITH ME AGAIN...
...I WILL BE ANGRY.
AND I WILL SEEK VENGEANCE.
GOOD DAY TO YOU ALL.

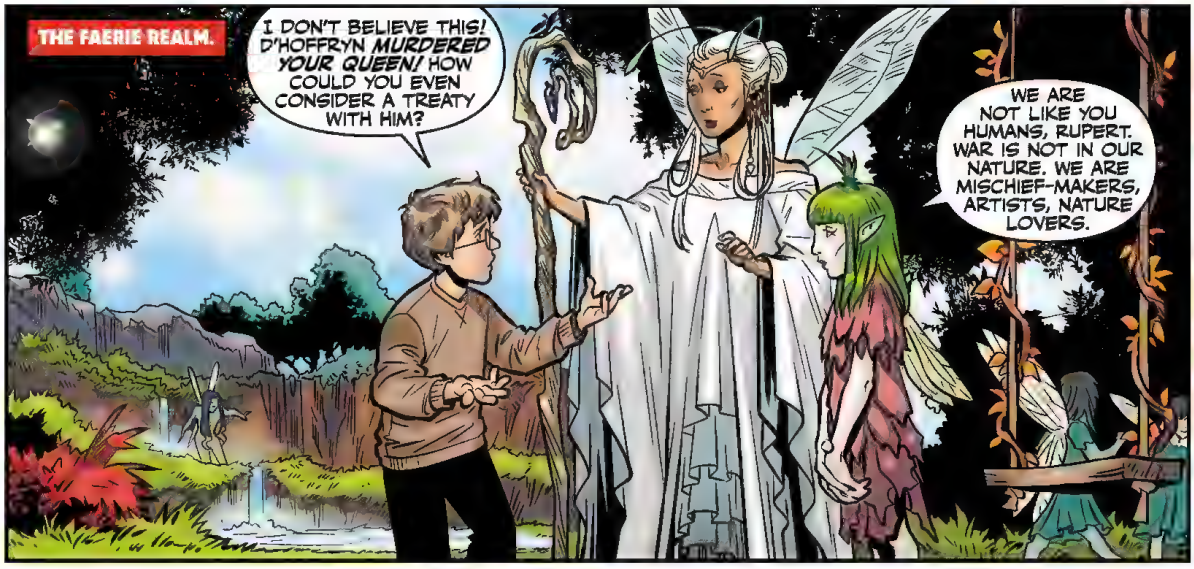
HOW? HOW COULD HE DO THAT?
I--I DON'T KNOW. IT'S BEYOND THE POWERS WE GAVE HIM--
HOLD ON. YOU GAVE HIM?
WELL, I--IT WASN'T LIKE THAT. WE WERE TRYING TO EMPOWER THE MAGIC COUNCIL TO FIGHT DEMON INCURSIONS. YOU WERE WORKING WITH THEM THEN, TOO.
MS. ROSENBERG, I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO COME WITH ME. WE'LL REQUIRE A FULL BRIEFING ON D'HOFFRYN'S CAPABILITIES.
LAKE, IN LIGHT OF YOUR...PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MS. ROSENBERG, I THINK IT'S BEST YOU SIT THIS ONE OUT.
O-OKAY. I'LL TRY TO HELP. BUT LIKE I SAID, I DON'T SEE HOW HE COULD DO SOMETHING LIKE--
--WAIT.
THERE'S ONE WAY HE COULD DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING! A VENGEANCE DEMON CAN ALTER REALITY TO GRANT THE WISH OF A REVENGE-SEEKING HUMAN.
HE'S GOT SOMEONE WHO WANTS REVENGE! ON US, ON THE UNITED STATES, ON THE WORLD...WE JUST NEED TO FIND OUT WHO!

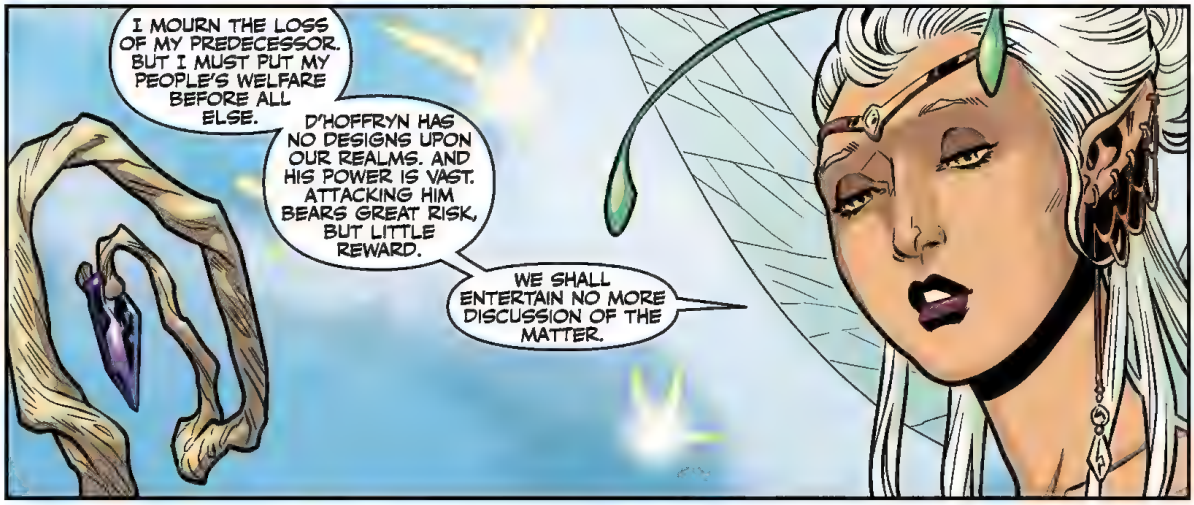
DINO-MITE DINOSAUR PARK.
NOW CLOSED.
JONATHAN?
I'M SO RELIEVED YOU FINALLY GOT IN TOUCH. YOU LOOK... HEALTHY.
LESS DECAYED THAN YOU THOUGHT, YOU MEAN, SINCE YOU MADE SURE THE DEMON WHO ANIMATED MY NEW BODY GOT KILLED?
I HAD NO CHOICE. HE WAS EVIL. HE WANTED TO MURDER MY FRIENDS.
BUT NOW I CAN HELP YOU. I'VE GOT A ROBOT BODY ALL SET TO KEEP YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS IN UNTIL--
OH, IT'S COOL. NO NEED FOR THAT.
I FOUND SOMEONE WHO STOPPED THIS BODY FROM ROTTING. EVEN BETTER--HE CAN STOP IT FOREVER! MAKE ME IMMORTAL.
D'HOFFRYN'S GETTING ME MY REVENGE. ON YOU AND ALL THOSE OTHER JERKS WHO SCREWED ME OVER.
AND THEN HE'S GOING TO MAKE ME THE FIRST MALE VENGEANCE DEMON.
HIGHLY UNORTHODOX. BUT IT IS A NEW AGE OF MAGIC, YOU SEE. AND SO MANY RULES HAVE YET TO BE WRITTEN.

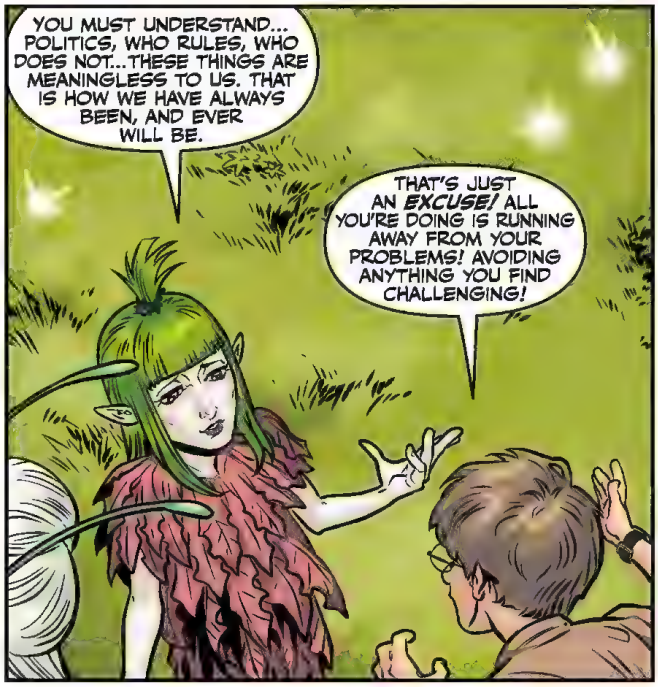
WELL, THAT MAKES ME THE THIRD WHEEL. I'LL JUST SKEDADDLE, THEN...
HOLD ON. THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO BEFORE I CAN BECOME A VENGEANCE DEMON.
PROVE I CAN HANDLE REVENGING MYSELF ON MY EX-BEST FRIEND. PERSONALLY.
GO AHEAD. KILL ME. IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T DESERVE IT, AFTER WHAT I DID TO YOU.
RELAX, DRAMA QUEEN--AND I TOTALLY DON'T MEAN THAT IN A HOMOPHOBIC WAY--I'M NOT GONNA KILL YOU.
BUT I DO THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT YOUR LOYAL "FRIENDS" REALLY THINK OF YOU.
ANDREW MEANS WELL, BUT I DON'T REALLY TRUST HIM.
IF I WAS A BIG BAD LOOKIN' FOR A WEAK-WILLED WANKER TO MIND CONTROL, LOOK NO FURTHER.
WE'RE WAY PAST BANANA TALKIES AND MINER HELMETS. I DON'T SEE WHAT USE ANDREW'S GOING TO BE.

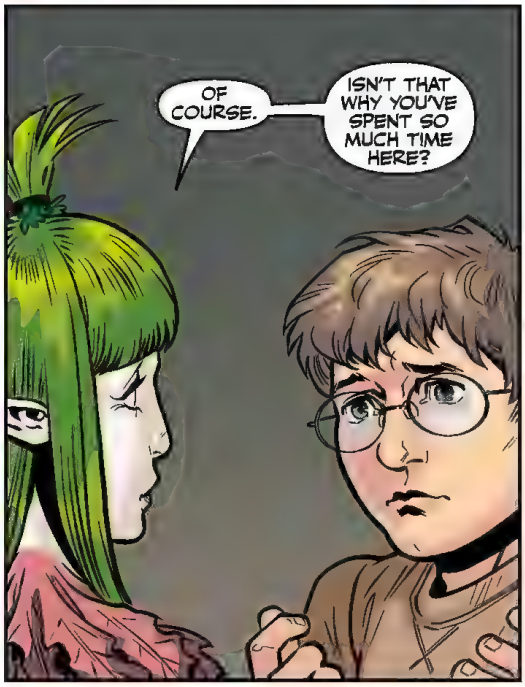

TH-THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE. THEY HAVE GOOD REASONS TO...TO DOUBT ME.
SURE. SO LET'S CHECK IN WITH PEOPLE WHO DON'T. LIKE *CLIVE*, THE HANDSOME, BOWIE-ESQUE GUY WHOSE LIFE YOU SAVED.
BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW HE HUNG OUT WITH ONE OF YOUR MANY ONLINE DATES RECENTLY. I WONDER WHAT THEY TALKED ABOUT?
YEAH, ANDREW WAS TOO MUCH WORK FOR ME. HE'S TRYING SO HARD--AND IN ALL THE WRONG WAYS--I GET EXHAUSTED JUST BEING AROUND HIM.
I MEAN, BEING IN THE CLOSET'S ONE THING, BUT TO GET TO HIS AGE WITHOUT EVER REALIZING YOU'RE GAY? WHO WANTS TO GET INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE THAT REPRESSED?
NOT EVERYONE GREW UP IN SAN FRANCISCO, BRIAN. IF IT WAS JUST HIS SEXUALITY, I WOULDN'T BE CONCERNED. BUT IT'S *EVERYTHING*, ISN'T IT?
THERE'S SO MUCH HE JUST DOESN'T SEEM TO GET.
IT--IT'S A LIE. THOSE COULD BE ILLUSIONS.
THEY COULD BE. BUT THEY'RE NOT, AND YOU KNOW IT.
BECAUSE, DEEP DOWN WHERE YOU CAN'T DENY IT, YOU REALIZE THAT *EVERYTHING THEY SAID ABOUT YOU IS TRUE.*

I THINK WE'RE DONE HERE.
MASTERFULLY EXECUTED, MR. LEVINSON. A *VERY* PROMISING START.
AS I ALWAYS TOLD MY VENGEANCE DEMONS-- NEVER GO FOR THE KILL WHEN YOU CAN GO FOR THE PAIN.
SO YOU'RE NOT GOING TO KILL THE SLAYER AND HER GANG OF IDIOTS?
NOT UNLESS THEY FORCE MY HAND. BUT IF THEY CONTINUE TO INTERFERE, AFTER I WARNED THEM NOT TO, I MIGHT HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.
THEN AGAIN, WITH THAT GROUP, JUST KILLING THE *RIGHT* ONES CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE OF ALL.
AND THEN YOU HAVE THE DELIGHT OF WATCHING THE AGONIES OF THE SURVIVORS.

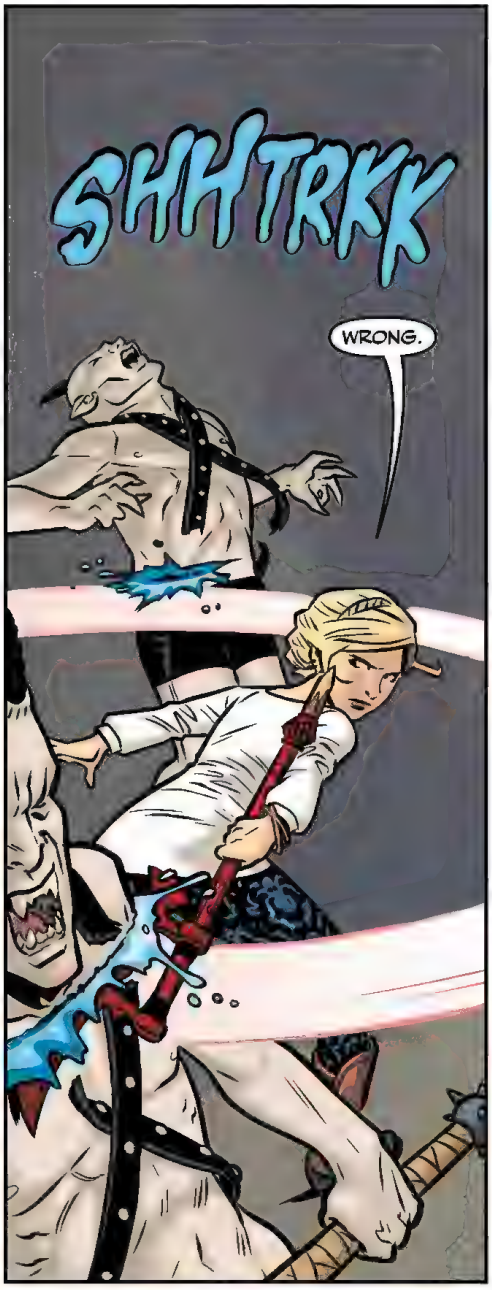

THE FAERIE REALM.
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! D'HOFFRYN *MURDERED YOUR QUEEN!* HOW COULD YOU EVEN CONSIDER A TREATY WITH HIM?
WE ARE NOT LIKE YOU HUMANS, RUPERT. WAR IS NOT IN OUR NATURE. WE ARE MISCHIEF-MAKERS, ARTISTS, NATURE LOVERS.

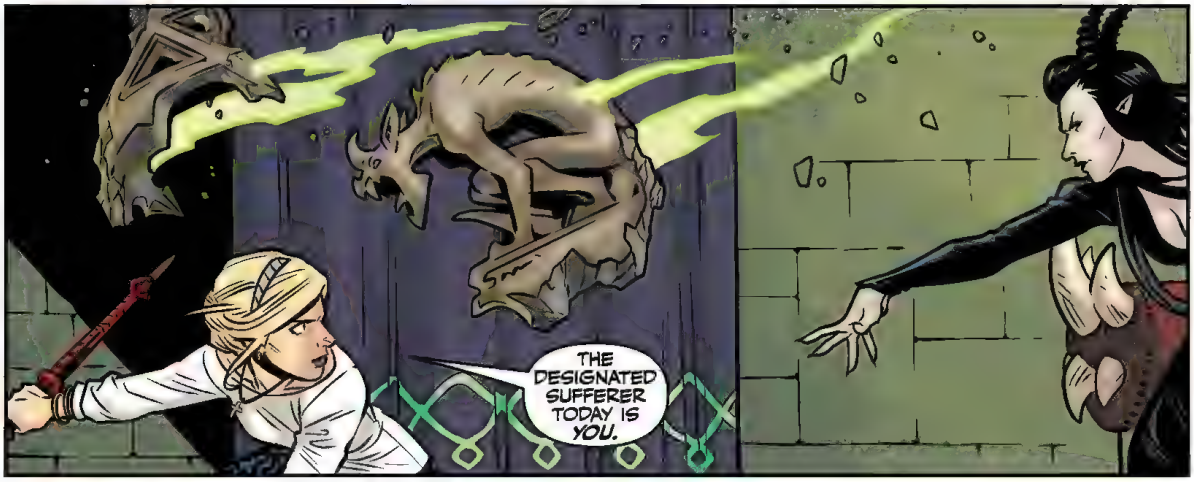

I MOURN THE LOSS OF MY PREDECESSOR. BUT I MUST PUT MY PEOPLE'S WELFARE BEFORE ALL ELSE.
D'HOFFRYN HAS NO DESIGNS UPON OUR REALMS. AND HIS POWER IS VAST. ATTACKING HIM BEARS GREAT RISK, BUT LITTLE REWARD.
WE SHALL ENTERTAIN NO MORE DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER.


YOU MUST UNDERSTAND... POLITICS, WHO RULES, WHO DOES NOT...THESE THINGS ARE MEANINGLESS TO US. THAT IS HOW WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, AND EVER WILL BE.
THAT'S JUST AN *EXCUSE!* ALL YOU'RE DOING IS RUNNING AWAY FROM YOUR PROBLEMS! AVOIDING ANYTHING YOU FIND CHALLENGING!

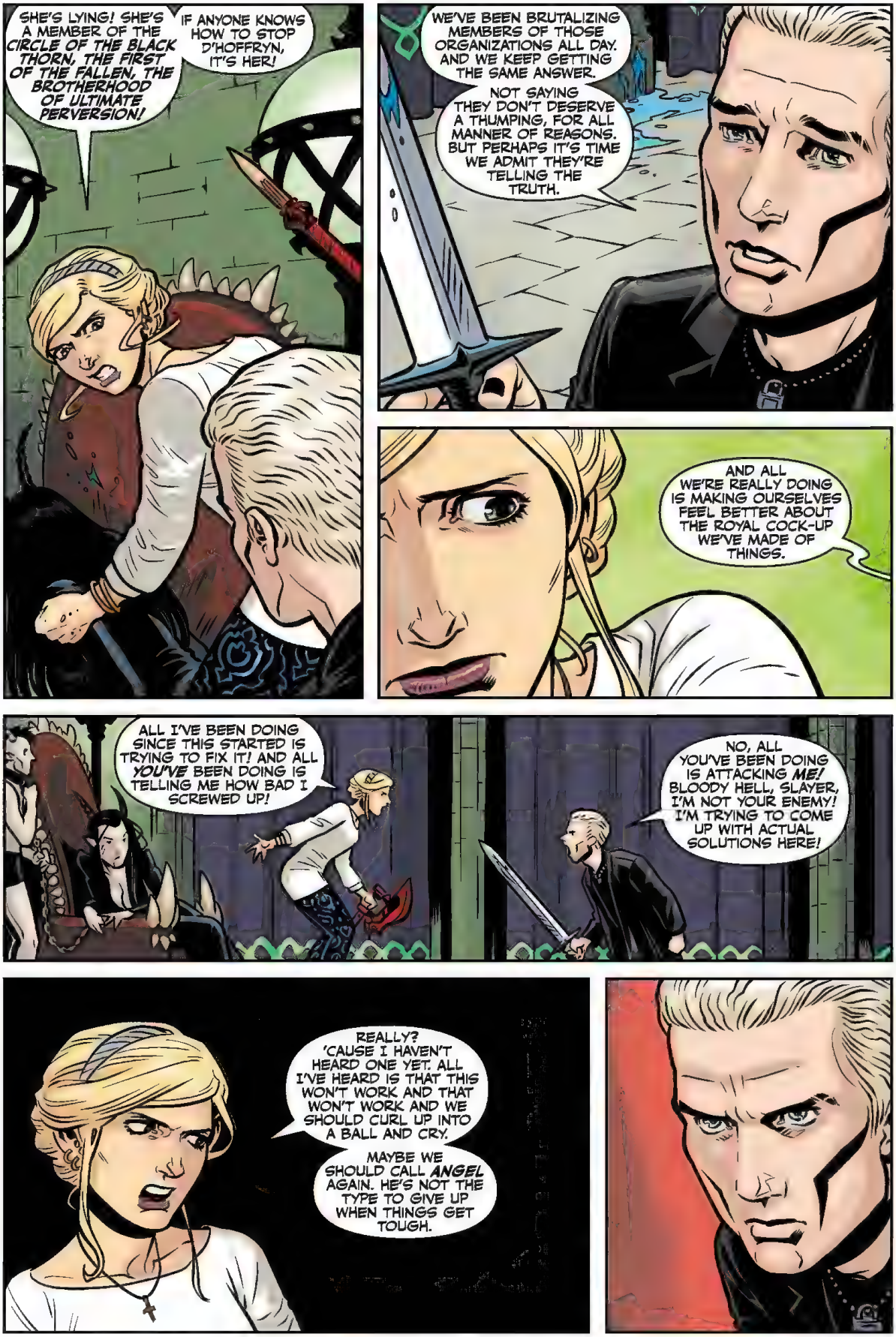

OF COURSE.
ISN'T THAT WHY YOU'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME HERE?

THE THRONE ROOM OF ARCHDUCHESS VENOBIA.
KILL THEM, YOU INCOMPETENT WORMS! AND DO IT SLOWLY! I WANT THEM TO SUFFER FOR DARING TO VIOLATE MY CHAMBERS!

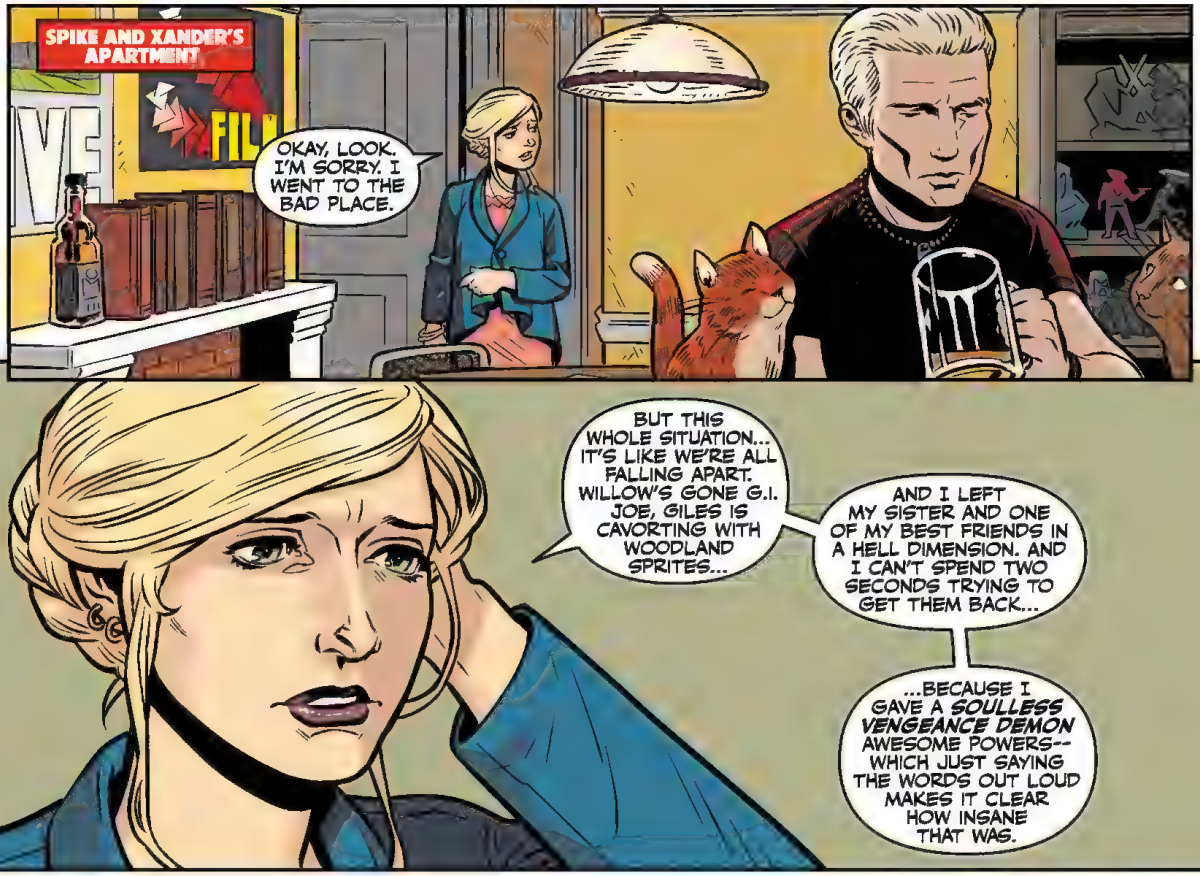

SHHTRKK
WRONG.


THE DESIGNATED SUFFERER TODAY IS YOU.

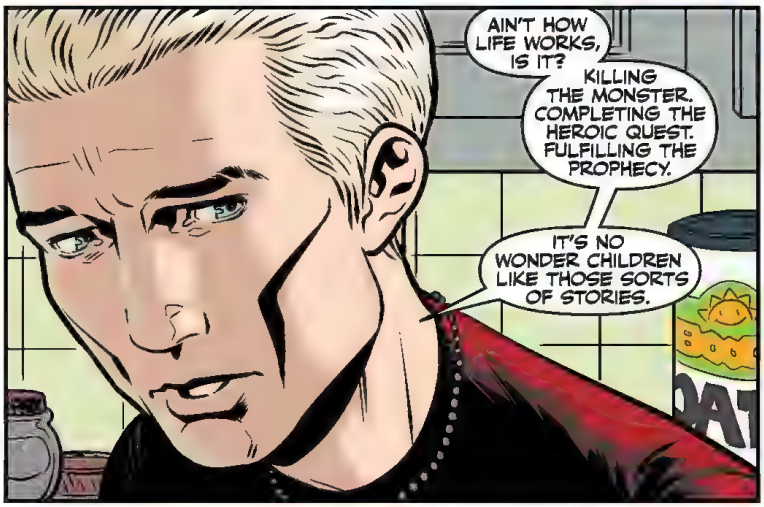
WHRAK
AHKK!
TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT D'HOFFRYN. HOW TO STOP HIM. HOW TO HURT HIM.
AS HE IS NOW? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DO EITHER-- URK!
WRONG ANSWER. YOUR KIND LIKES HOLDING THE LEASH, NOT BEING ON IT. YOU HAVE SOME ANGLE. SOME PLAN.
WE'VE TRIED. AS HAVE THE MOST DEPRAVED MINDS OF SCORES OF HELL DIMENSIONS.
THERE IS NO ANSWER. D'HOFFRYN IS SUPREME. I UNDERSTAND WE HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THAT.
KWCH
YOU BETTER SAY SOMETHING I LIKE WHILE YOU CAN STILL TALK, YOU DISGUSTING--
SLAYER. SHE'S HAD ENOUGH.

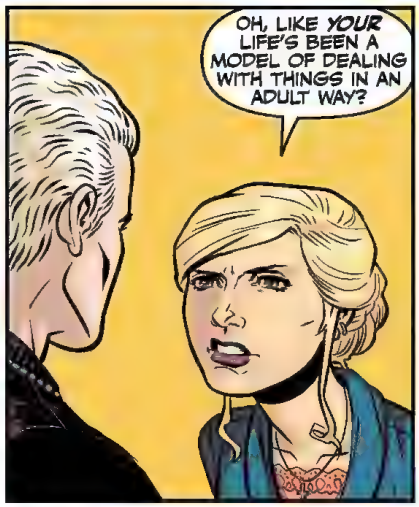

SHE'S LYING! SHE'S A MEMBER OF THE CIRCLE OF THE BLACK THORN, THE FIRST OF THE FALLEN, THE BROTHERHOOD OF ULTIMATE PERVERSION!
IF ANYONE KNOWS HOW TO STOP D'HOFFRYN, IT'S HER!
WE'VE BEEN BRUTALIZING MEMBERS OF THOSE ORGANIZATIONS ALL DAY. AND WE KEEP GETTING THE SAME ANSWER.
NOT SAYING THEY DON'T DESERVE A THUMPING, FOR ALL MANNER OF REASONS. BUT PERHAPS IT'S TIME WE ADMIT THEY'RE TELLING THE TRUTH.
AND ALL WE'RE REALLY DOING IS MAKING OURSELVES FEEL BETTER ABOUT THE ROYAL COCK-UP WE'VE MADE OF THINGS.
ALL I'VE BEEN DOING SINCE THIS STARTED IS TRYING TO FIX IT! AND ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING IS TELLING ME HOW BAD I SCREWED UP!
NO, ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING IS ATTACKING ME! BLOODY HELL, SLAYER, I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY! I'M TRYING TO COME UP WITH ACTUAL SOLUTIONS HERE!
REALLY? 'CAUSE I HAVEN'T HEARD ONE YET. ALL I'VE HEARD IS THAT THIS WON'T WORK AND THAT WON'T WORK AND WE SHOULD CURL UP INTO A BALL AND CRY.
MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL ANGEL AGAIN. HE'S NOT THE TYPE TO GIVE UP WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH.

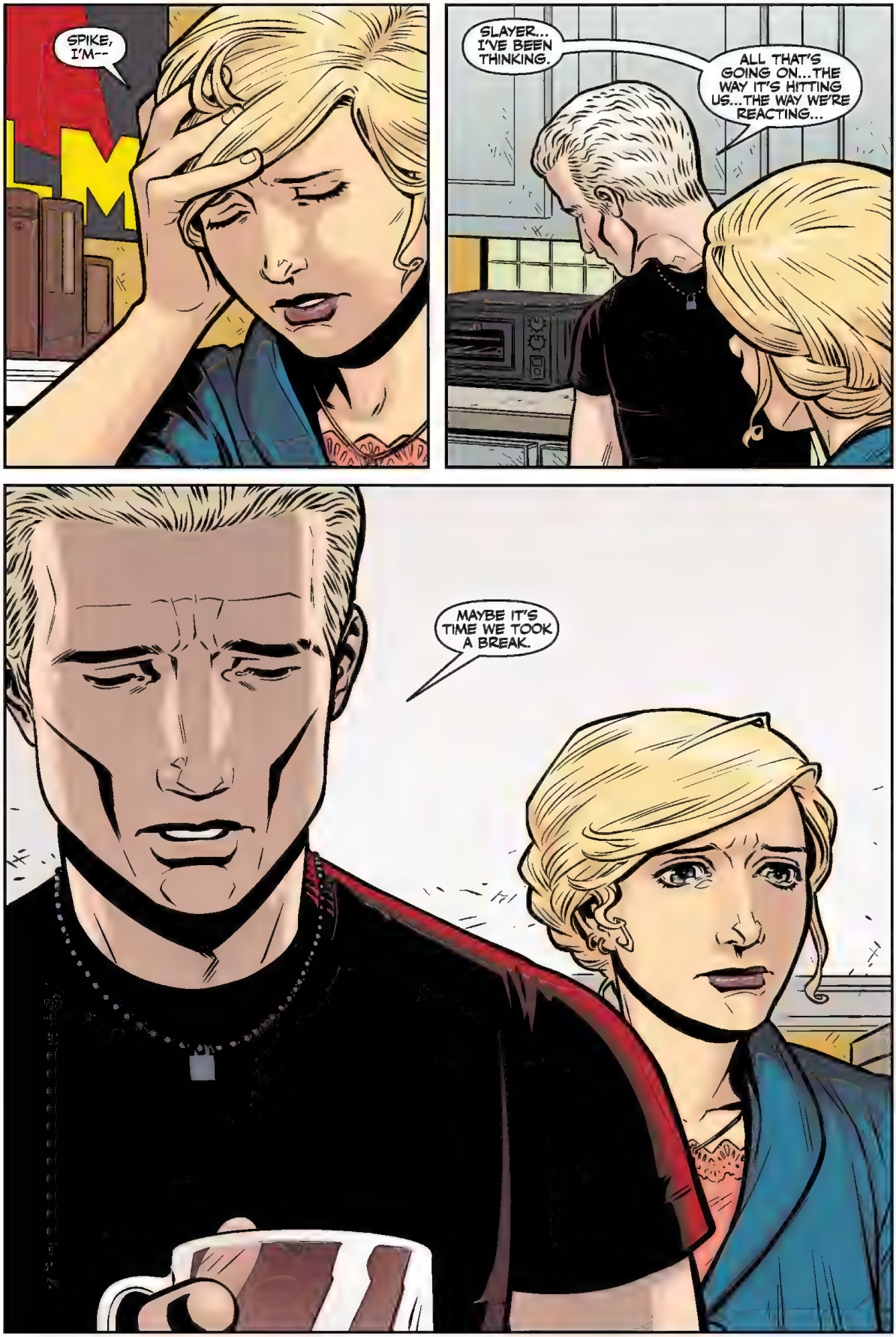
RIGHT. DO WHAT YOU LIKE. I'M OFF.
SPIKE, WAIT...
YES, BRING HIM BACK. WE WERE ENJOYING THAT.
AND NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE FLOW, BUT IF YOU CAN GET HIM TO TAKE OFF HIS SHIRT, IT'D IMPROVE THINGS IMMENSELY.
WHRAK
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION, LITTLE GUY. YOU COME UP WITH ANYTHING I CAN USE, I BETTER HEAR ABOUT IT.

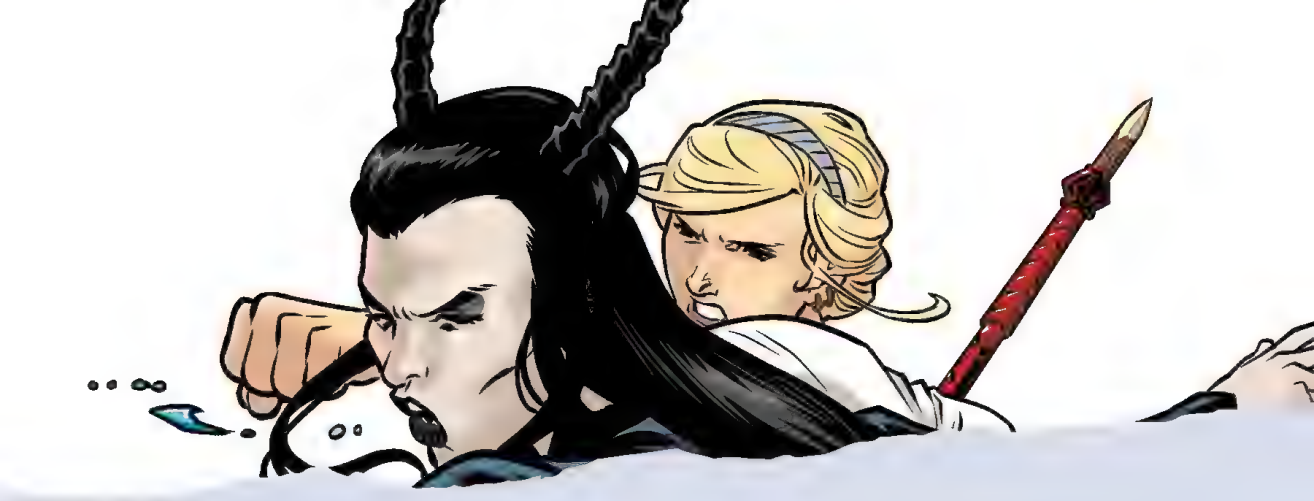

SPIKE AND XANDER'S APARTMENT
OKAY, LOOK. I'M SORRY. I WENT TO THE BAD PLACE.
BUT THIS WHOLE SITUATION... IT'S LIKE WE'RE ALL FALLING APART. WILLOW'S GONE G.I. JOE, GILES IS CAVORTING WITH WOODLAND SPRITES...
AND I LEFT MY SISTER AND ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS IN A HELL DIMENSION. AND I CAN'T SPEND TWO SECONDS TRYING TO GET THEM BACK...
...BECAUSE I GAVE A SOULLESS VENGEANCE DEMON AWESOME POWERS-- WHICH JUST SAYING THE WORDS OUT LOUD MAKES IT CLEAR HOW INSANE THAT WAS.

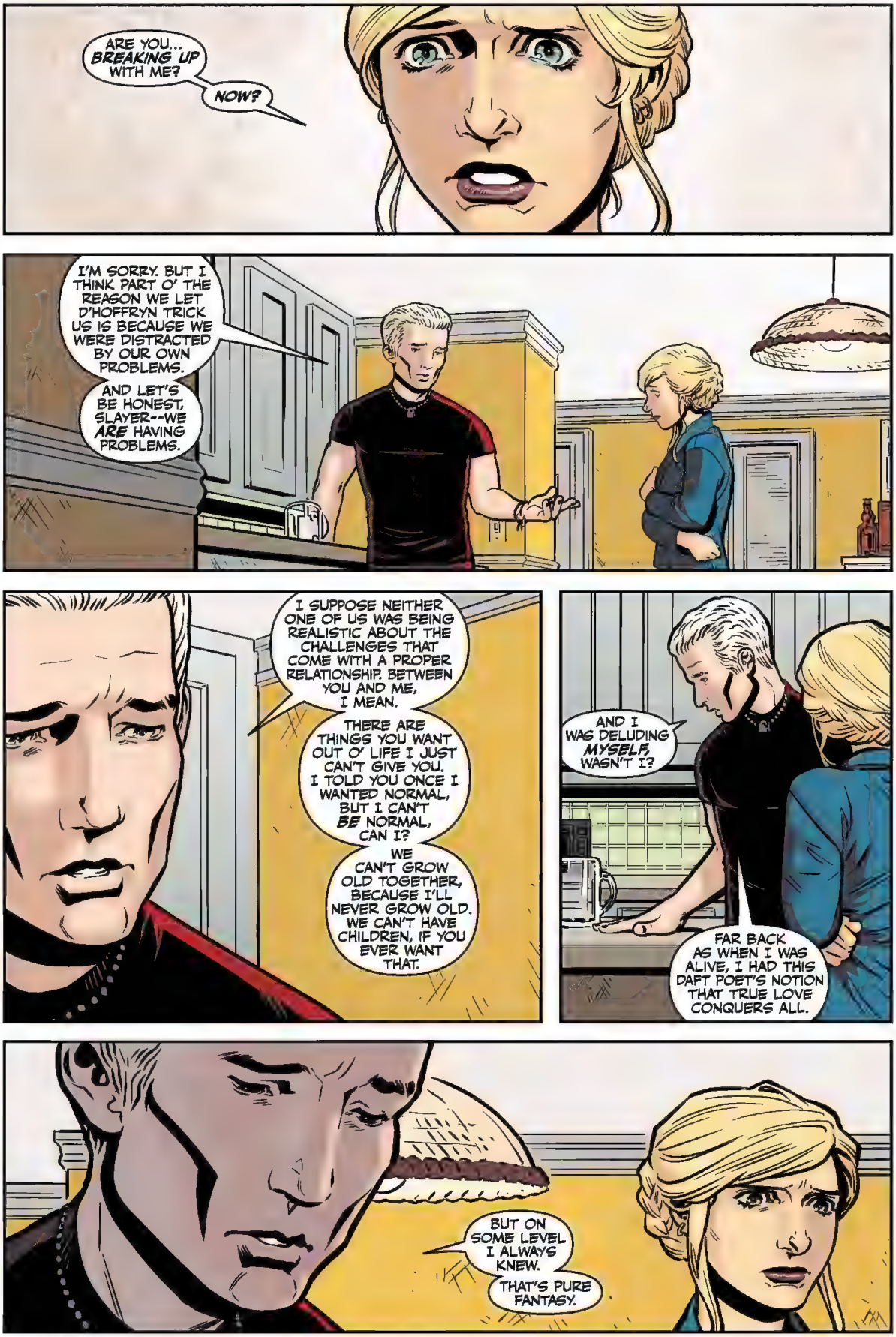
I WANT TO HELP. BUT ALL I SEEM TO BE DOING IS MAKING YOU ANGRIER.
IT'S NOT...I MEAN, YEAH, SOMETIMES IT'S YOU. BUT IT'S...
I WISH THERE WAS A BIG BAD. SOMEONE LIKE THE MASTER, WHO I COULD JUST KILL, AND PROBLEMS WOULD BE SOLVED. BUT EVEN KILLING D'HOFFRYN WOULDN'T FIX ALL THIS.

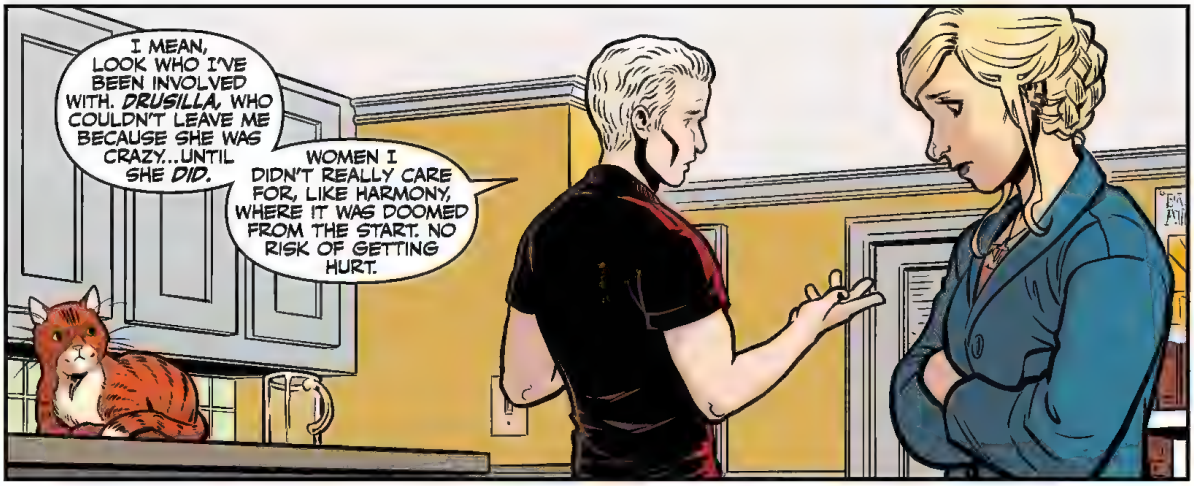

AIN'T HOW LIFE WORKS, IS IT?
KILLING THE MONSTER. COMPLETING THE HEROIC QUEST. FULFILLING THE PROPHECY.
IT'S NO WONDER CHILDREN LIKE THOSE SORTS OF STORIES.

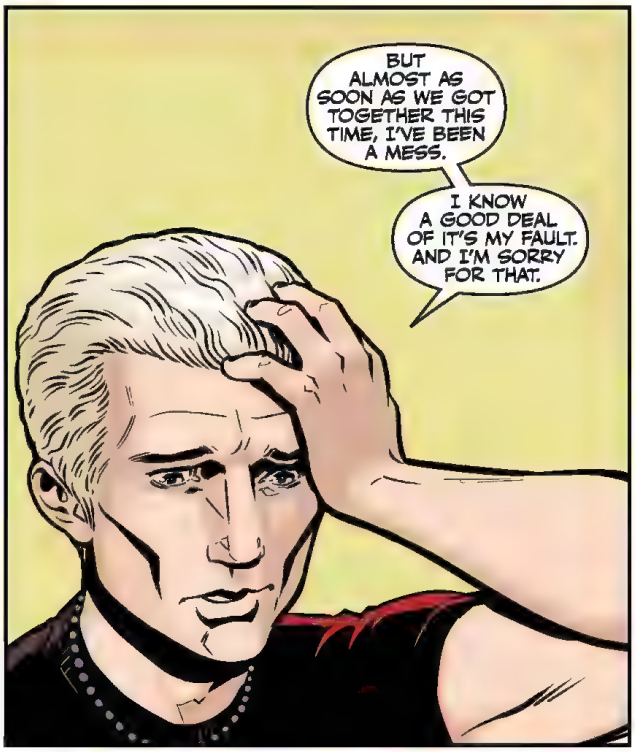

OH, LIKE YOUR LIFE'S BEEN A MODEL OF DEALING WITH THINGS IN AN ADULT WAY?

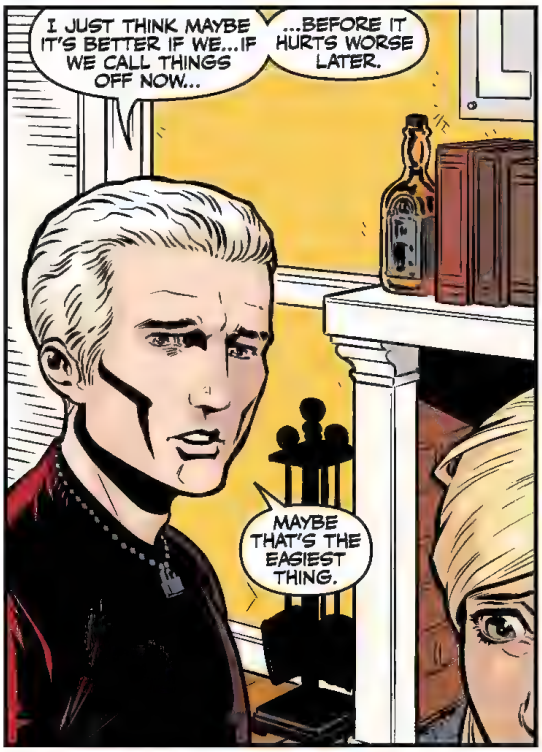

SPIKE, I'M--
SLAYER... I'VE BEEN THINKING.
ALL THAT'S GOING ON...THE WAY IT'S HITTING US...THE WAY WE'RE REACTING...
MAYBE IT'S TIME WE TOOK A BREAK.

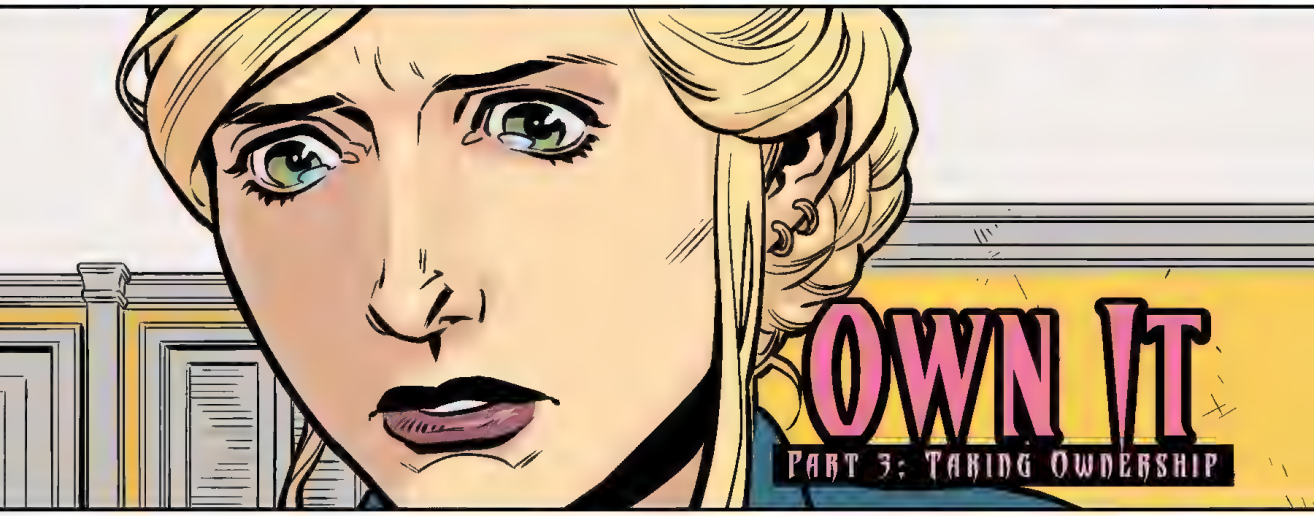


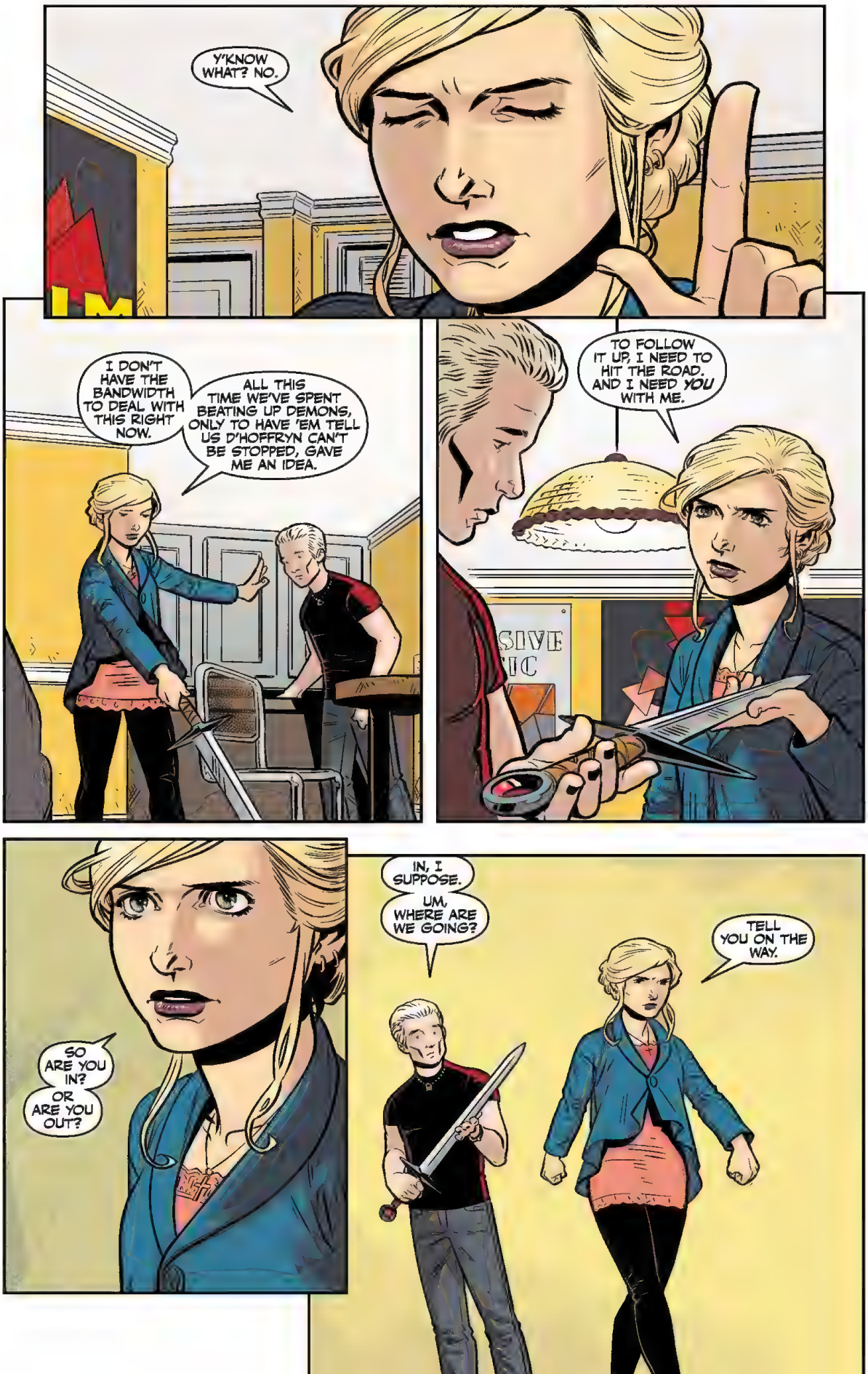

ARE YOU... BREAKING UP WITH ME?
NOW?
I'M SORRY. BUT I THINK PART O' THE REASON WE LET D'HOFFRYN TRICK US IS BECAUSE WE WERE DISTRACTED BY OUR OWN PROBLEMS.
AND LET'S BE HONEST, SLAYER--WE ARE HAVING PROBLEMS.
I SUPPOSE NEITHER ONE OF US WAS BEING REALISTIC ABOUT THE CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH A PROPER RELATIONSHIP. BETWEEN YOU AND ME, I MEAN.
THERE ARE THINGS YOU WANT OUT O' LIFE I JUST CAN'T GIVE YOU. I TOLD YOU ONCE I WANTED NORMAL, BUT I CAN'T BE NORMAL, CAN I?
WE CAN'T GROW OLD TOGETHER, BECAUSE I'LL NEVER GROW OLD. WE CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN, IF YOU EVER WANT THAT.
AND I WAS DELUDING MYSELF, WASN'T I?
FAR BACK AS WHEN I WAS ALIVE, I HAD THIS DAFT POET'S NOTION THAT TRUE LOVE CONQUERS ALL.
BUT ON SOME LEVEL I ALWAYS KNEW.
THAT'S PURE FANTASY.


I MEAN, LOOK WHO I'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH. DRUSILLA, WHO COULDN'T LEAVE ME BECAUSE SHE WAS CRAZY...UNTIL SHE DID.
WOMEN I DIDN'T REALLY CARE FOR, LIKE HARMONY, WHERE IT WAS DOOMED FROM THE START. NO RISK OF GETTING HURT.

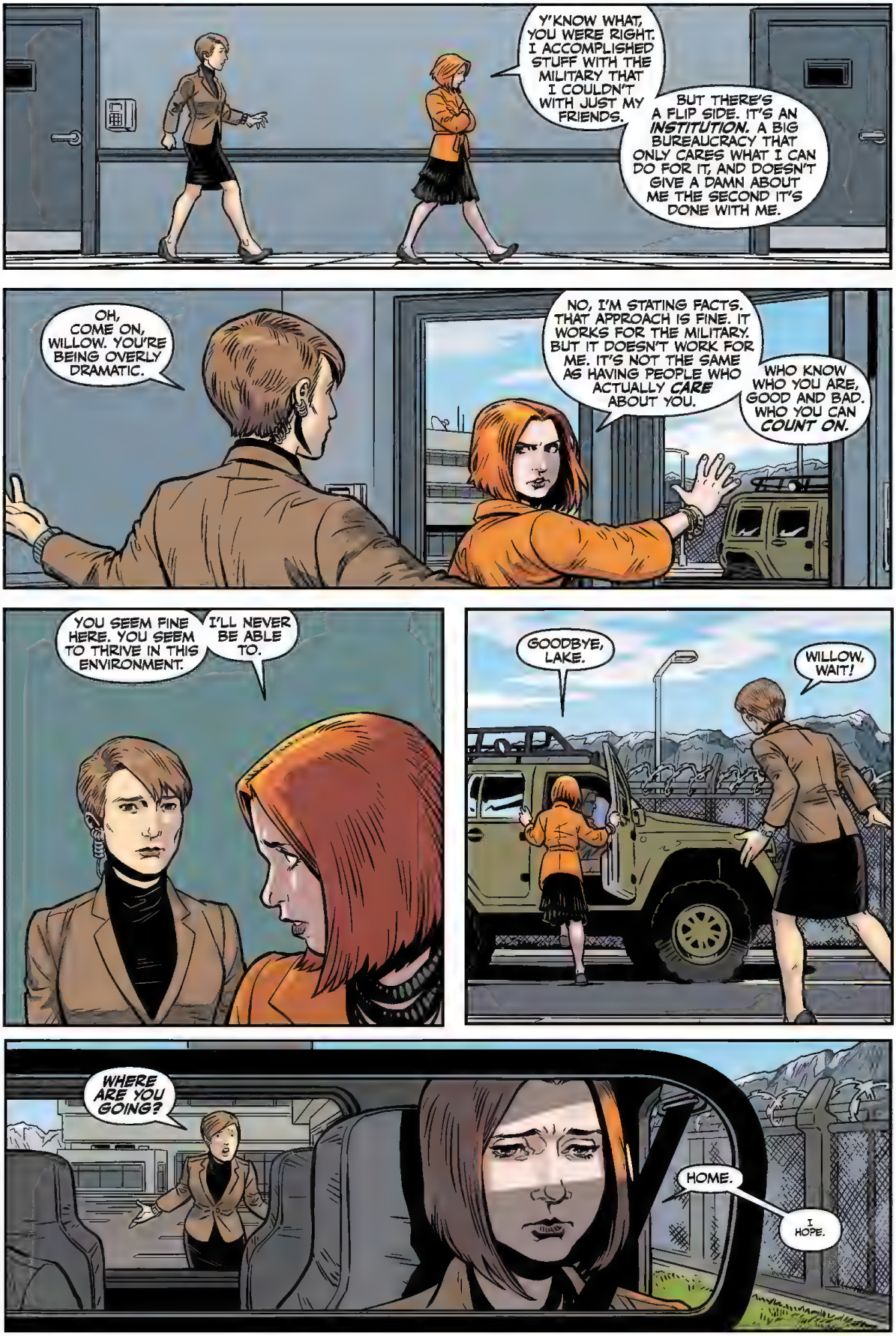

BUT ALMOST AS SOON AS WE GOT TOGETHER THIS TIME, I'VE BEEN A MESS.
I KNOW A GOOD DEAL OF IT'S MY FAULT. AND I'M SORRY FOR THAT.

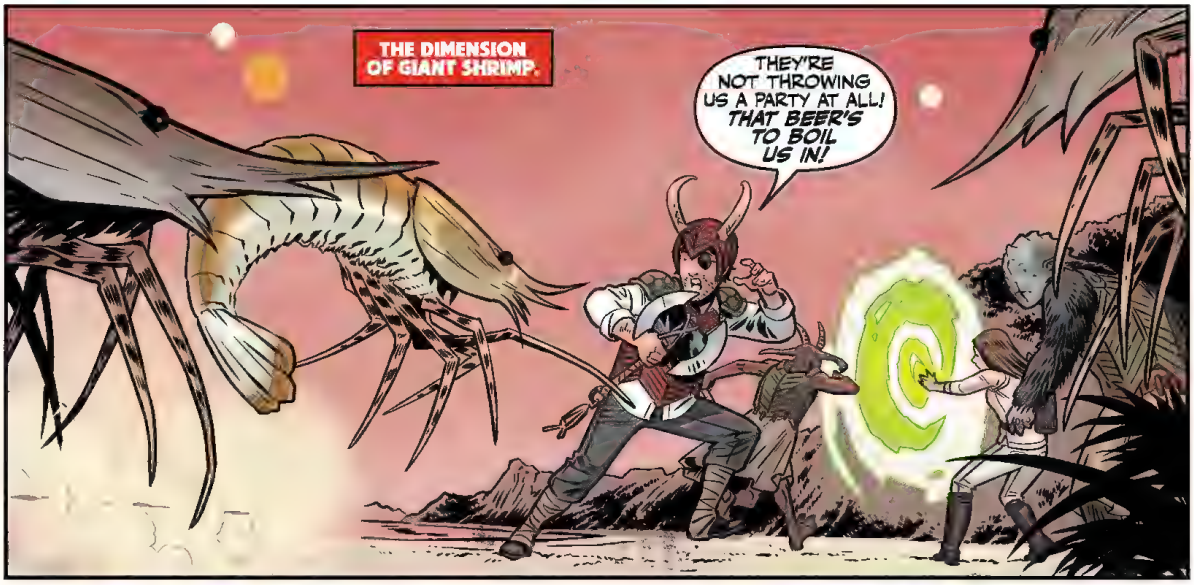

I JUST THINK MAYBE IT'S BETTER IF WE...IF WE CALL THINGS OFF NOW...
...BEFORE IT HURTS WORSE LATER.
MAYBE THAT'S THE EASIEST THING.

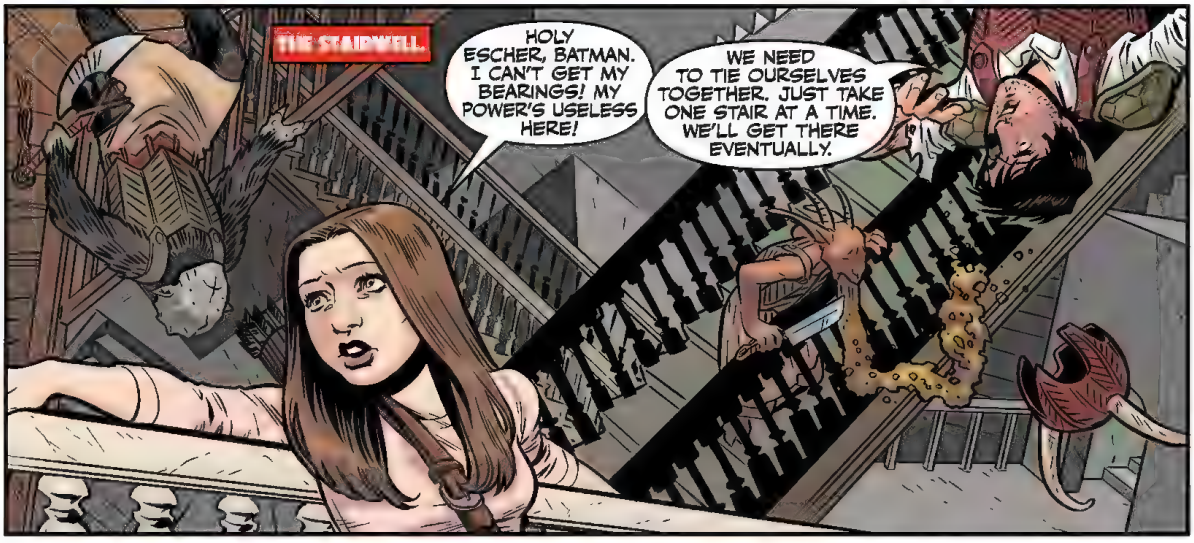

OWN IT
PART 3: TAKING OWNERSHIP


Y'KNOW WHAT? NO.
I DON'T HAVE THE BANDWIDTH TO DEAL WITH THIS RIGHT NOW.
ALL THIS TIME WE'VE SPENT BEATING UP DEMONS, ONLY TO HAVE 'EM TELL US D'HOFFRYN CAN'T BE STOPPED, GAVE ME AN IDEA.
TO FOLLOW IT UP, I NEED TO HIT THE ROAD. AND I NEED YOU WITH ME.
SO ARE YOU IN? OR ARE YOU OUT?
IN, I SUPPOSE.
UM, WHERE ARE WE GOING?
TELL YOU ON THE WAY.

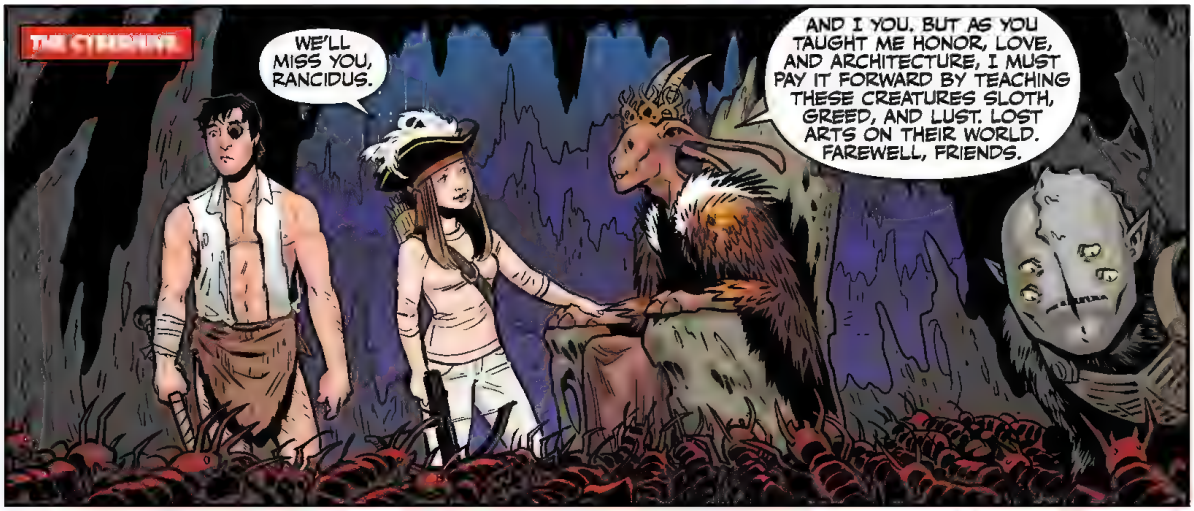
NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO.
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
MS. ROSENBERG, YOU JUST ADMITTED TO ME THAT YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS GAVE D'HOFFRYN THE POWERS THAT HE'S JUST USED TO SINK A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE.
YOUR JUDGMENT CAN'T BE TRUSTED. YOU ARE TO LEAVE THIS BASE IMMEDIATELY. CONSIDER YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE REVOKED.
WAIT! ADMIRAL, WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER ON THIS!
LAKE, TELL HIM!
ESCORT MS. ROSENBERG OFF THE PREMISES. THAT'S AN ORDER.
THIS IS WHAT D'HOFFRYN WANTS! TO SPLIT US UP! YOU HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'LL LISTEN!
WILLOW, I'M SORRY. THIS IS THE MILITARY. IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.
ORDERS ARE ORDERS.
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

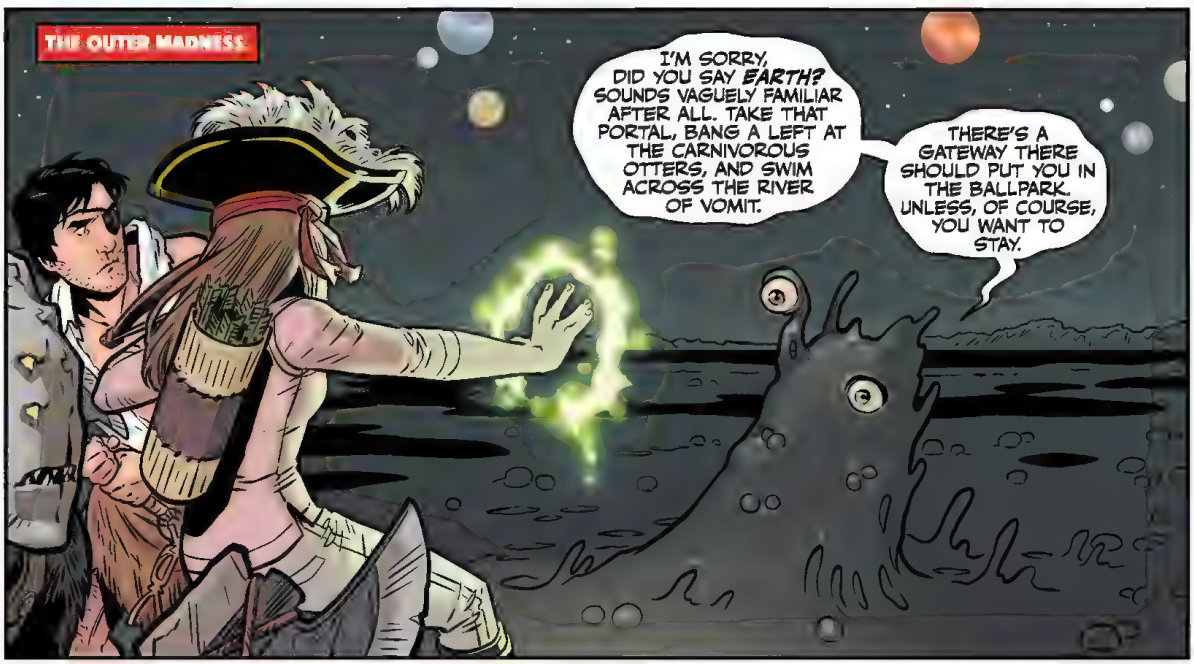

Y'KNOW WHAT, YOU WERE RIGHT. I ACCOMPLISHED STUFF WITH THE MILITARY THAT I COULDN'T WITH JUST MY FRIENDS.
BUT THERE'S A FLIP SIDE. IT'S AN *INSTITUTION.* A BIG BUREAUCRACY THAT ONLY CARES WHAT I CAN DO FOR IT, AND DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ME THE SECOND IT'S DONE WITH ME.
OH, COME ON, WILLOW. YOU'RE BEING OVERLY DRAMATIC.
NO, I'M STATING FACTS. THAT APPROACH IS FINE. IT WORKS FOR THE MILITARY. BUT IT DOESN'T WORK FOR ME. IT'S NOT THE SAME AS HAVING PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY *CARE* ABOUT YOU.
WHO KNOW WHO YOU ARE, GOOD AND BAD. WHO YOU CAN *COUNT ON.*
YOU SEEM FINE HERE. YOU SEEM TO THRIVE IN THIS ENVIRONMENT.
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO.
GOODBYE, LAKE.
WILLOW, WAIT!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
HOME.
I HOPE.

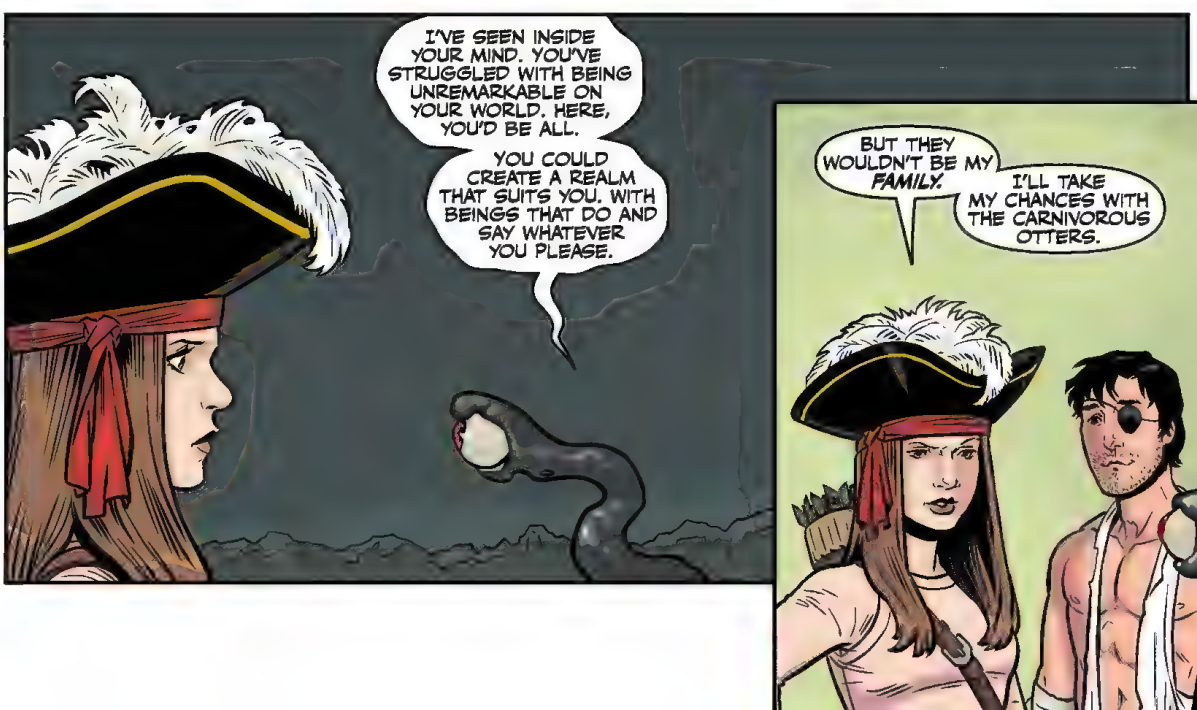

THE DIMENSION OF GIANT SHRIMP.
THEY'RE NOT THROWING US A PARTY AT ALL! THAT BEER'S TO BOIL US IN!


THE STAIRWELL.
HOLY ESCHER, BATMAN. I CAN'T GET MY BEARINGS! MY POWER'S USELESS HERE!
WE NEED TO TIE OURSELVES TOGETHER. JUST TAKE ONE STAIR AT A TIME. WE'LL GET THERE EVENTUALLY.

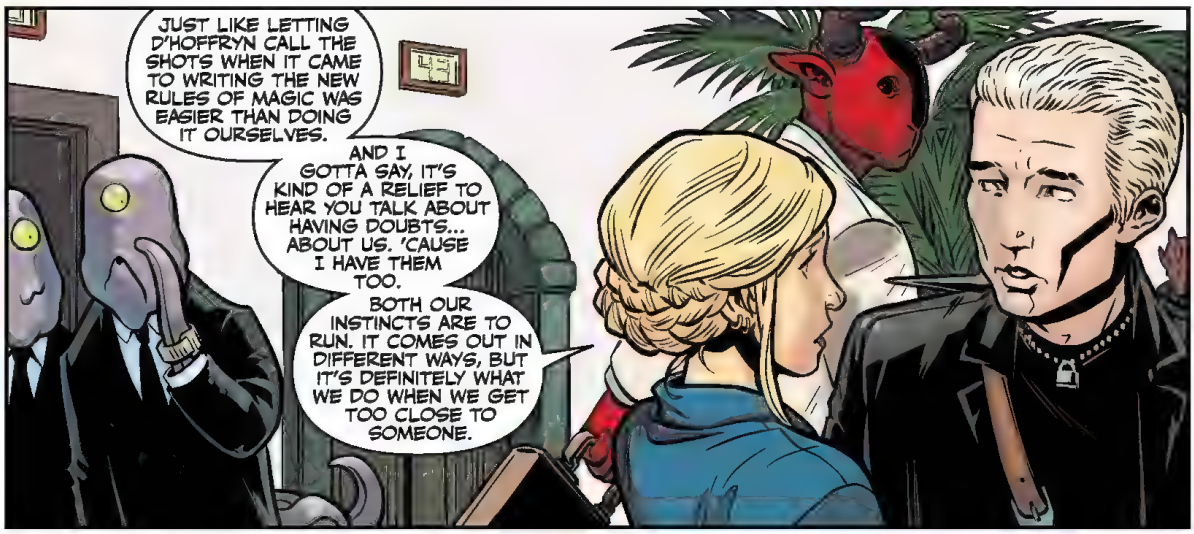
THE FOREST OF DOOM.
I'LL POINT YOU IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF EARTH. IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR PANTS.
MY... PANTS?

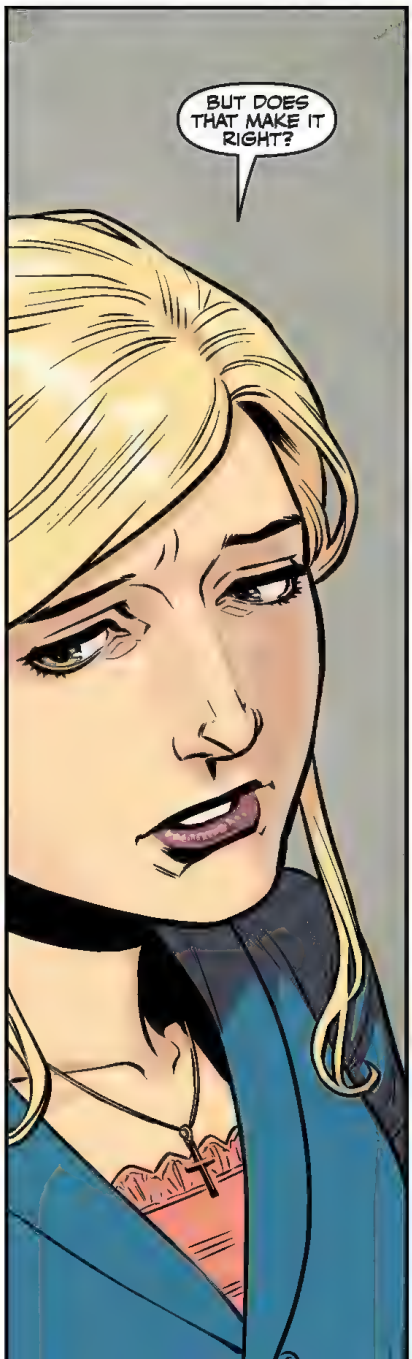

THE CYBERNAUT
WE'LL MISS YOU, RANCIDUS.
AND I YOU. BUT AS YOU TAUGHT ME HONOR, LOVE, AND ARCHITECTURE, I MUST PAY IT FORWARD BY TEACHING THESE CREATURES SLOTH, GREED, AND LUST. LOST ARTS ON THEIR WORLD. FAREWELL, FRIENDS.

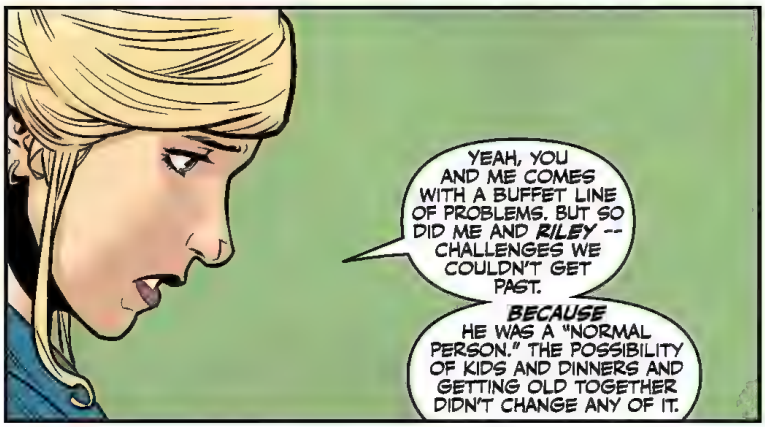

THE OUTER MADNESS
I'M SORRY, DID YOU SAY *EARTH?* SOUNDS VAGUELY FAMILIAR AFTER ALL. TAKE THAT PORTAL, BANG A LEFT AT THE CARNIVOROUS OTTERS, AND SWIM ACROSS THE RIVER OF VOMIT.
THERE'S A GATEWAY THERE SHOULD PUT YOU IN THE BALLPARK. UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU WANT TO STAY.

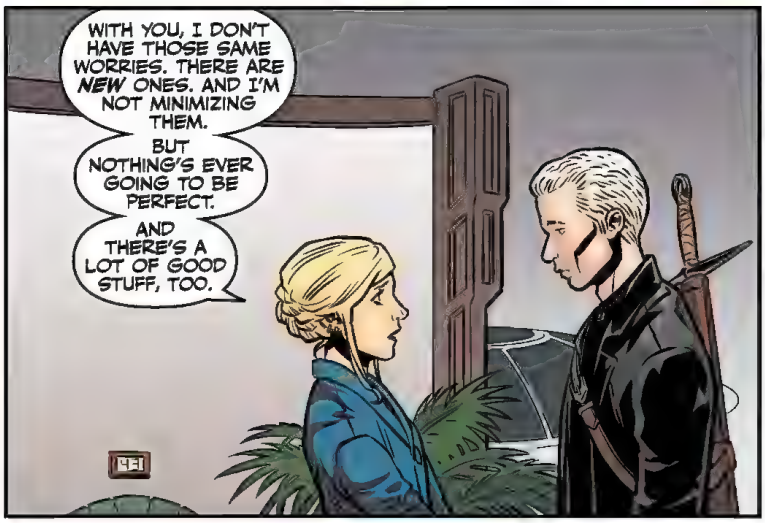

I'VE SEEN INSIDE YOUR MIND. YOU'VE STRUGGLED WITH BEING UNREMARKABLE ON YOUR WORLD. HERE, YOU'D BE ALL.
YOU COULD CREATE A REALM THAT SUITS YOU. WITH BEINGS THAT DO AND SAY WHATEVER YOU PLEASE.
BUT THEY WOULDN'T BE MY *FAMILY.*
I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES WITH THE CARNIVOROUS OTTERS.

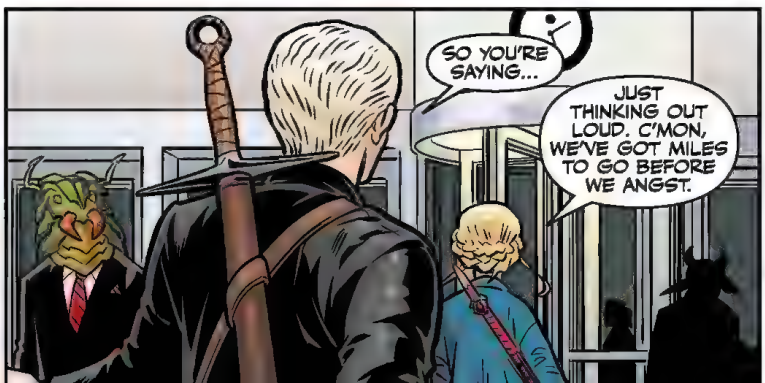
THE THRONE ROOM OF ARCHDUCHESS VENOBIA.
THIS STRATAGEM OF YOURS COULD WELL FAIL.
SURE. BUT I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO FIGHT D'HOFFRYN, OR CONFRONT HIM IN ANY WAY. JUST DO THE ONE THING I SAID, AND SPREAD THE WORD. NO RISK TO YOU AT ALL.
VERY WELL. NOW GO, AND ANNOY ME NO FURTHER.
I THOUGHT I PUT YOU IN THE COLLAR AND YOUR SLAVE ON THE THRONE.
YES, WELL. SOME OF US REALIZE IT'S USELESS TO TRY TO DENY WHAT WE ARE.
20
43
Y'KNOW, I'VE BEEN THINKING. ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER.
I'M NOT CERTAIN THIS IS THE PLACE FOR--
IT WOULD BE EASIER TO BREAK UP NOW.

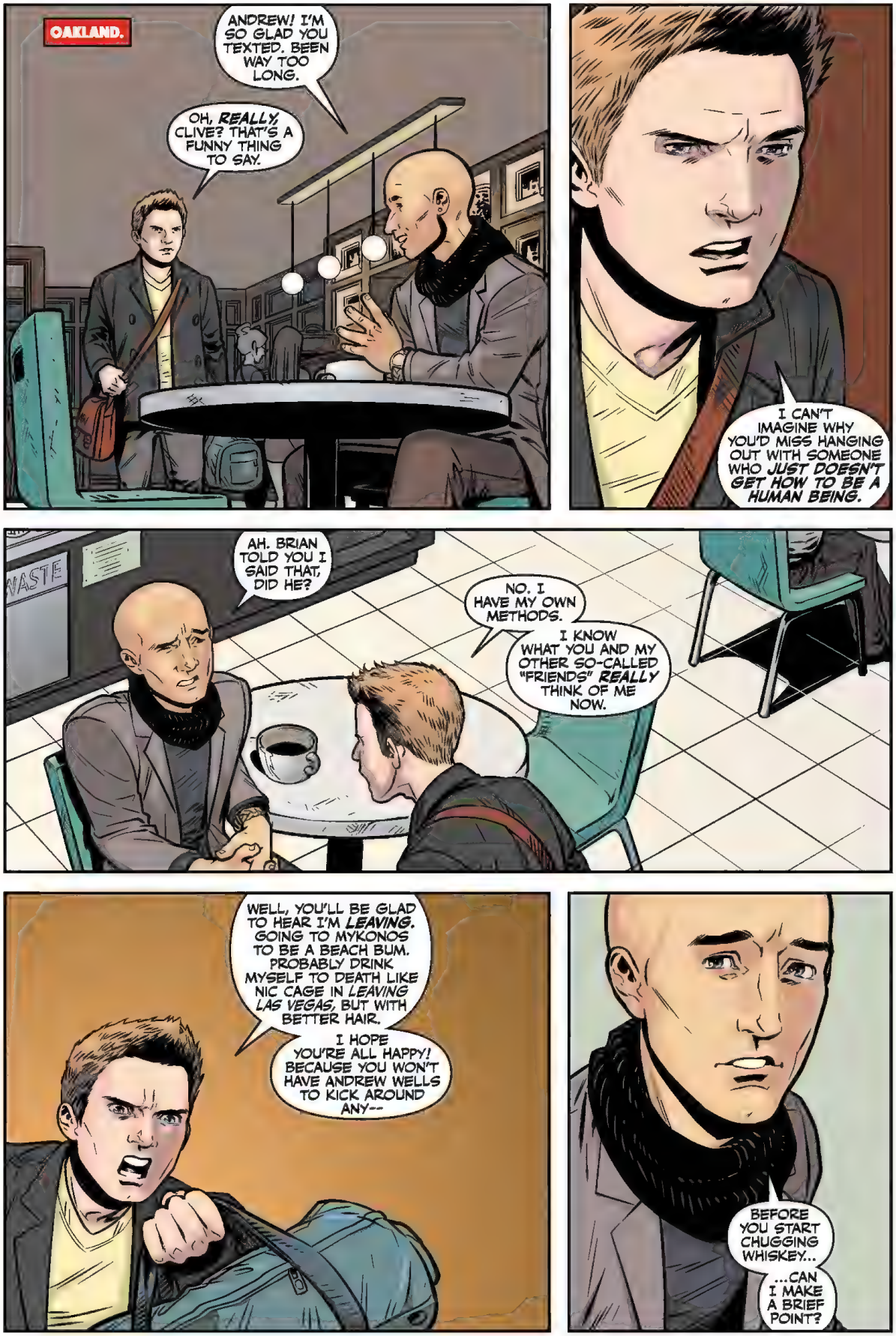

JUST LIKE LETTING D'HOFFRYN CALL THE SHOTS WHEN IT CAME TO WRITING THE NEW RULES OF MAGIC WAS EASIER THAN DOING IT OURSELVES.
AND I GOTTA SAY, IT'S KIND OF A RELIEF TO HEAR YOU TALK ABOUT HAVING DOUBTS... ABOUT US. 'CAUSE I HAVE THEM TOO.
BOTH OUR INSTINCTS ARE TO RUN. IT COMES OUT IN DIFFERENT WAYS, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY WHAT WE DO WHEN WE GET TOO CLOSE TO SOMEONE.

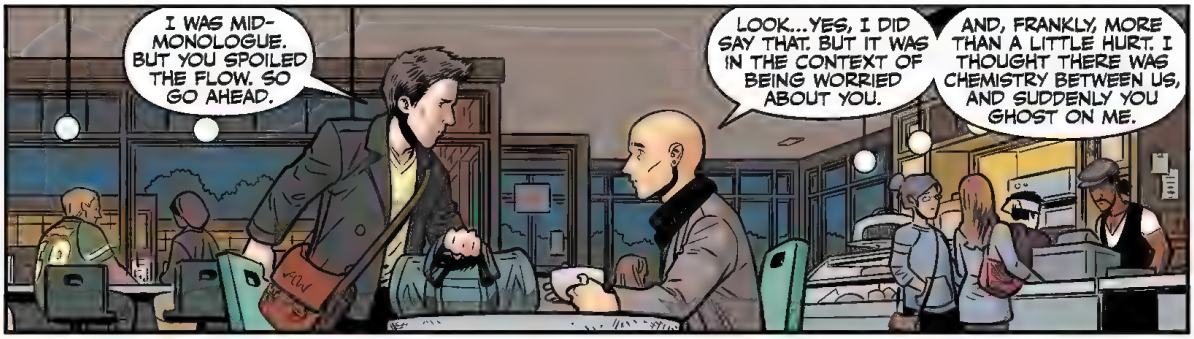

BUT DOES THAT MAKE IT RIGHT?

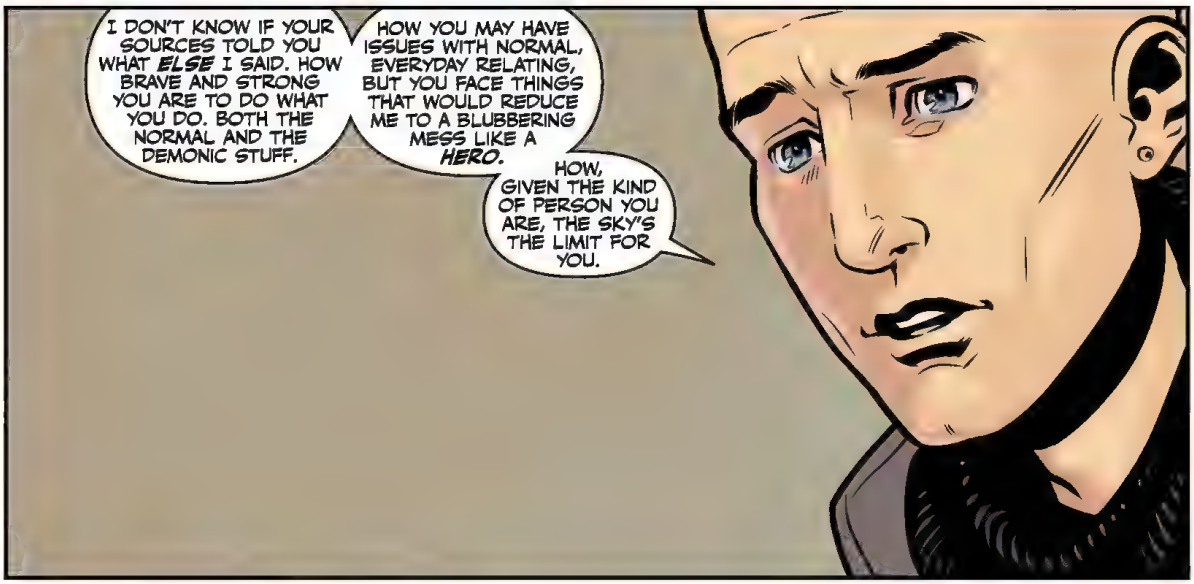

YEAH, YOU AND ME COMES WITH A BUFFET LINE OF PROBLEMS. BUT SO DID ME AND *RILEY* -- CHALLENGES WE COULDN'T GET PAST.
BECAUSE HE WAS A "NORMAL PERSON." THE POSSIBILITY OF KIDS AND DINNERS AND GETTING OLD TOGETHER DIDN'T CHANGE ANY OF IT.

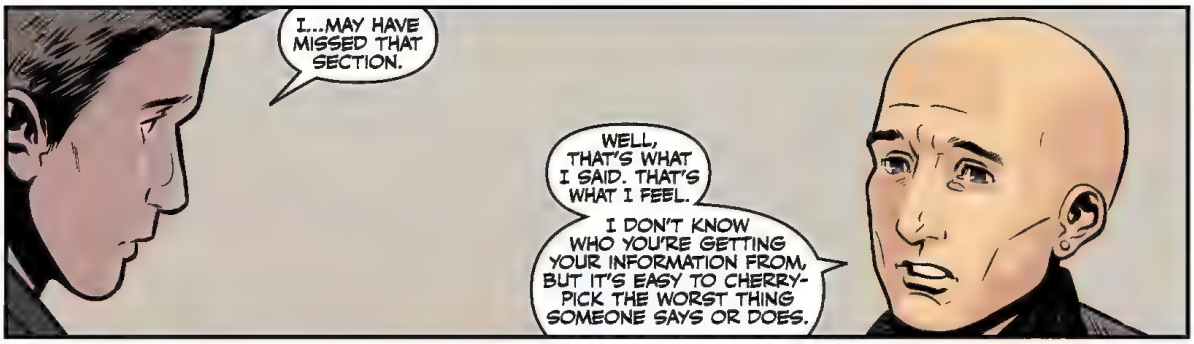

WITH YOU, I DON'T HAVE THOSE SAME WORRIES. THERE ARE *NEW* ONES. AND I'M NOT MINIMIZING THEM.
BUT NOTHING'S EVER GOING TO BE PERFECT.
AND THERE'S A LOT OF GOOD STUFF, TOO.


SO YOU'RE SAYING...
JUST THINKING OUT LOUD. C'MON, WE'VE GOT MILES TO GO BEFORE WE ANGST.

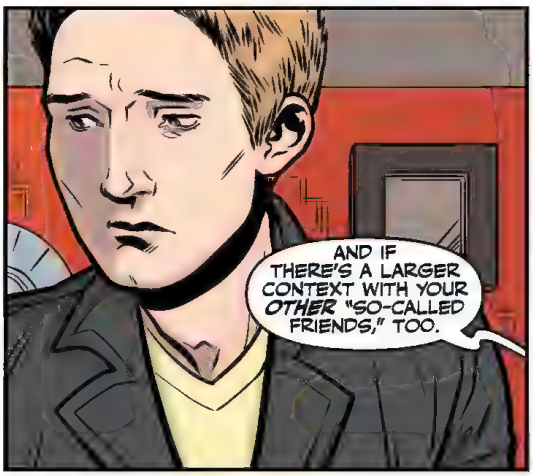

OAKLAND.
ANDREW! I'M SO GLAD YOU TEXTED. BEEN WAY TOO LONG.
OH, REALLY, CLIVE? THAT'S A FUNNY THING TO SAY.
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY YOU'D MISS HANGING OUT WITH SOMEONE WHO JUST DOESN'T GET HOW TO BE A HUMAN BEING.
AH. BRIAN TOLD YOU I SAID THAT, DID HE?
NO. I HAVE MY OWN METHODS.
I KNOW WHAT YOU AND MY OTHER SO-CALLED "FRIENDS" REALLY THINK OF ME NOW.
WELL, YOU'LL BE GLAD TO HEAR I'M LEAVING. GOING TO MYKONOS TO BE A BEACH BUM. PROBABLY DRINK MYSELF TO DEATH LIKE NIC CAGE IN LEAVING LAS VEGAS, BUT WITH BETTER HAIR.
I HOPE YOU'RE ALL HAPPY! BECAUSE YOU WON'T HAVE ANDREW WELLS TO KICK AROUND ANY--
BEFORE YOU START CHUGGING WHISKEY...
...CAN I MAKE A BRIEF POINT?


I WAS MID-MONOLOGUE. BUT YOU SPOILED THE FLOW. SO GO AHEAD.
LOOK...YES, I DID SAY THAT. BUT IT WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF BEING WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
AND, FRANKLY, MORE THAN A LITTLE HURT. I THOUGHT THERE WAS CHEMISTRY BETWEEN US, AND SUDDENLY YOU GHOST ON ME.

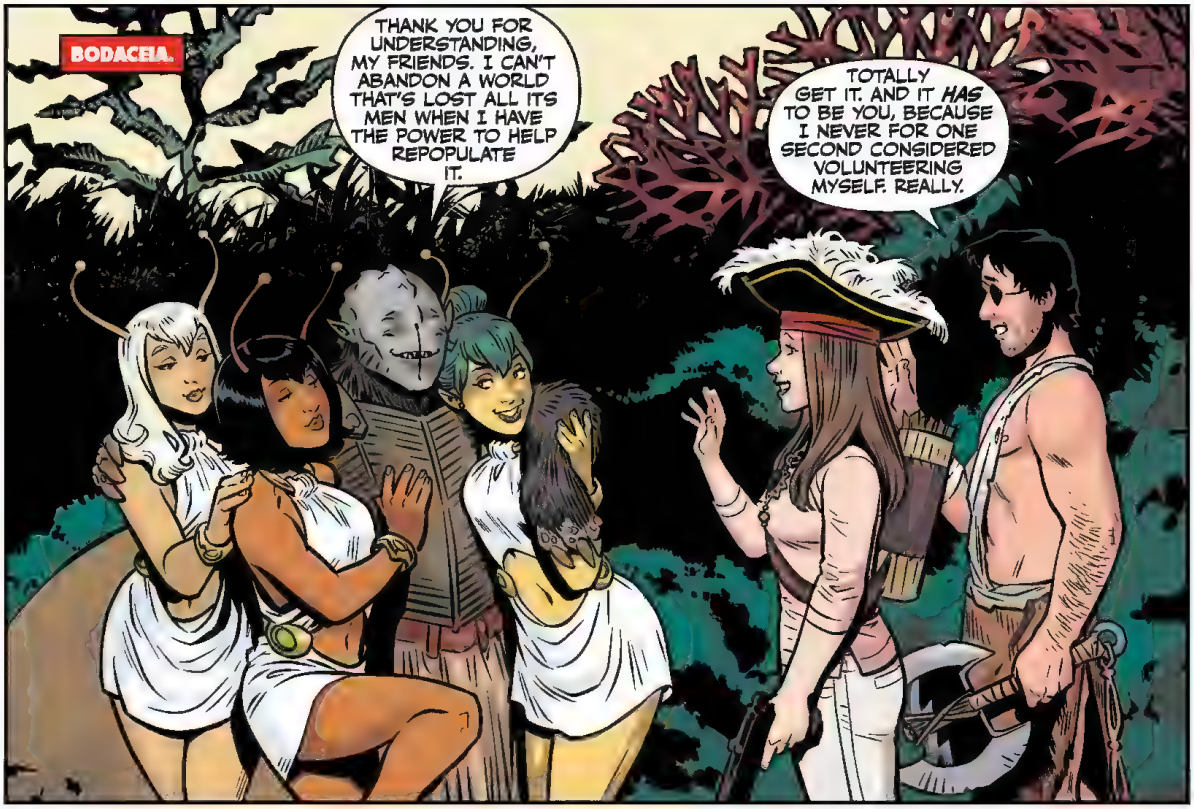

I DON'T KNOW IF YOUR SOURCES TOLD YOU WHAT *ELSE* I SAID. HOW BRAVE AND STRONG YOU ARE TO DO WHAT YOU DO. BOTH THE NORMAL AND THE DEMONIC STUFF.
HOW YOU MAY HAVE ISSUES WITH NORMAL, EVERYDAY RELATING, BUT YOU FACE THINGS THAT WOULD REDUCE ME TO A BLUBBERING MESS LIKE A *HERO.*
HOW, GIVEN THE KIND OF PERSON YOU ARE, THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR YOU.

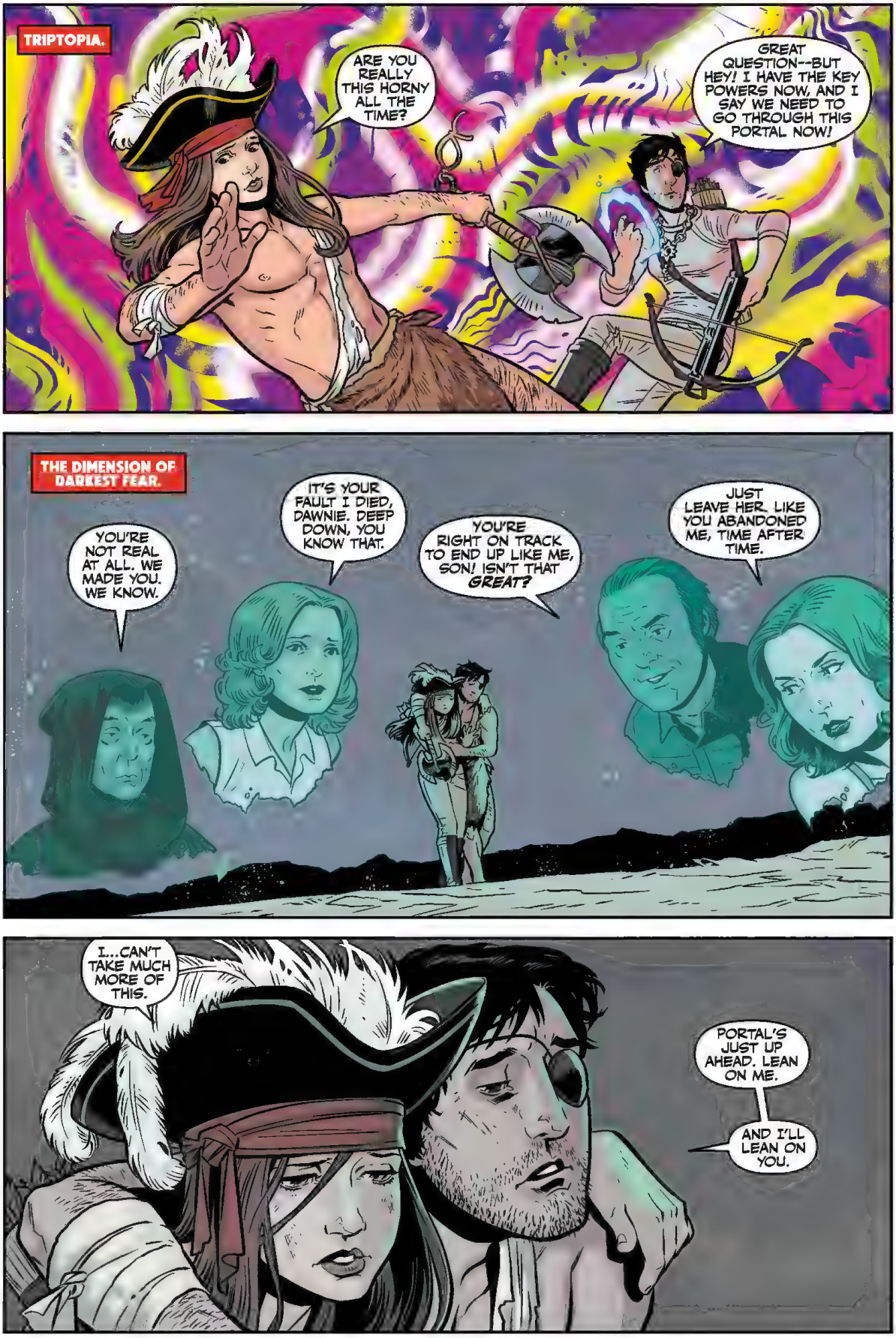

I...MAY HAVE MISSED THAT SECTION.
WELL, THAT'S WHAT I SAID. THAT'S WHAT I FEEL.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE GETTING YOUR INFORMATION FROM, BUT IT'S EASY TO CHERRY-PICK THE WORST THING SOMEONE SAYS OR DOES.

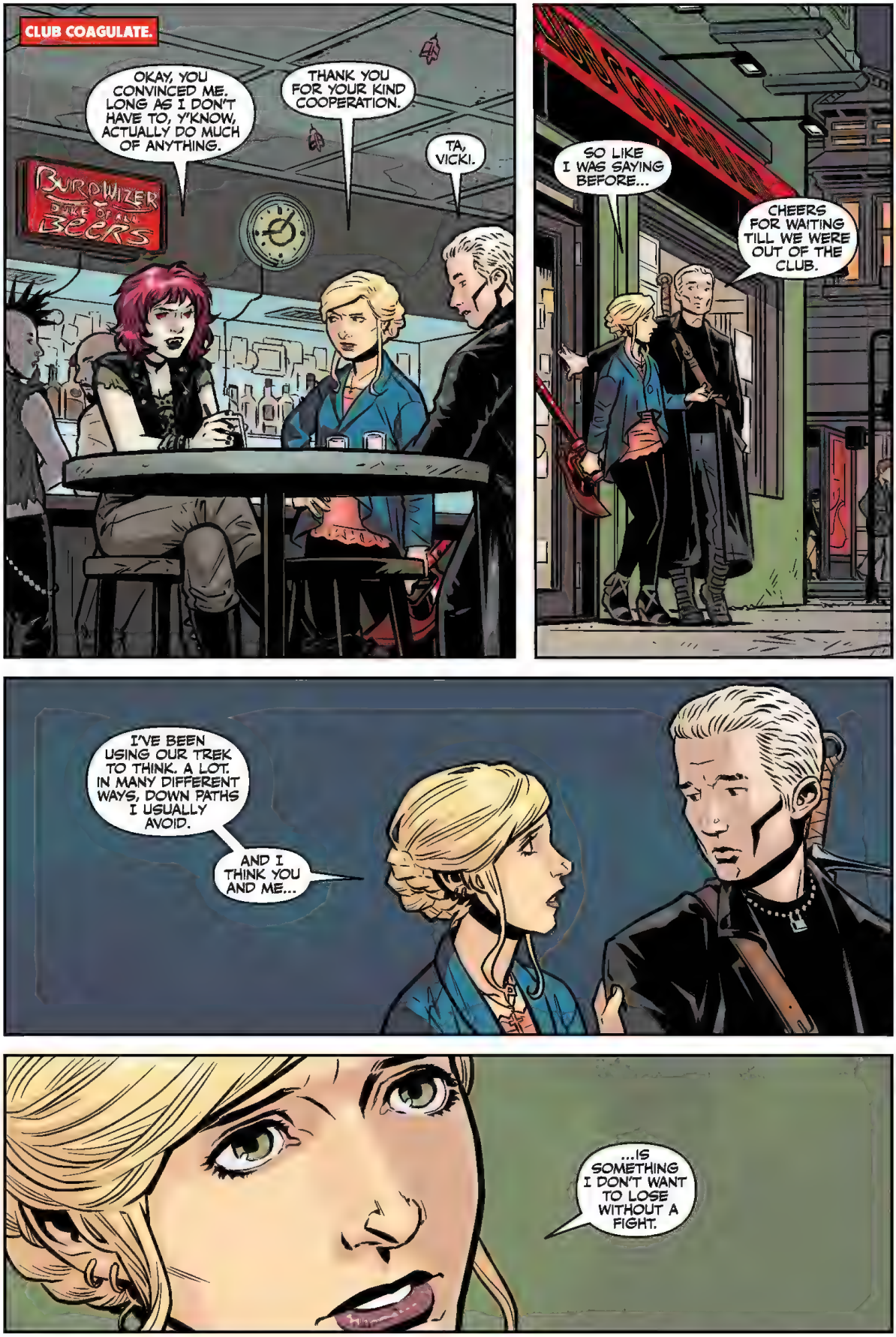
IF I WERE YOU, I'D ASK MYSELF IF THE PERSON WHO REPEATED THESE WORDS TO YOU HAS YOUR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART.

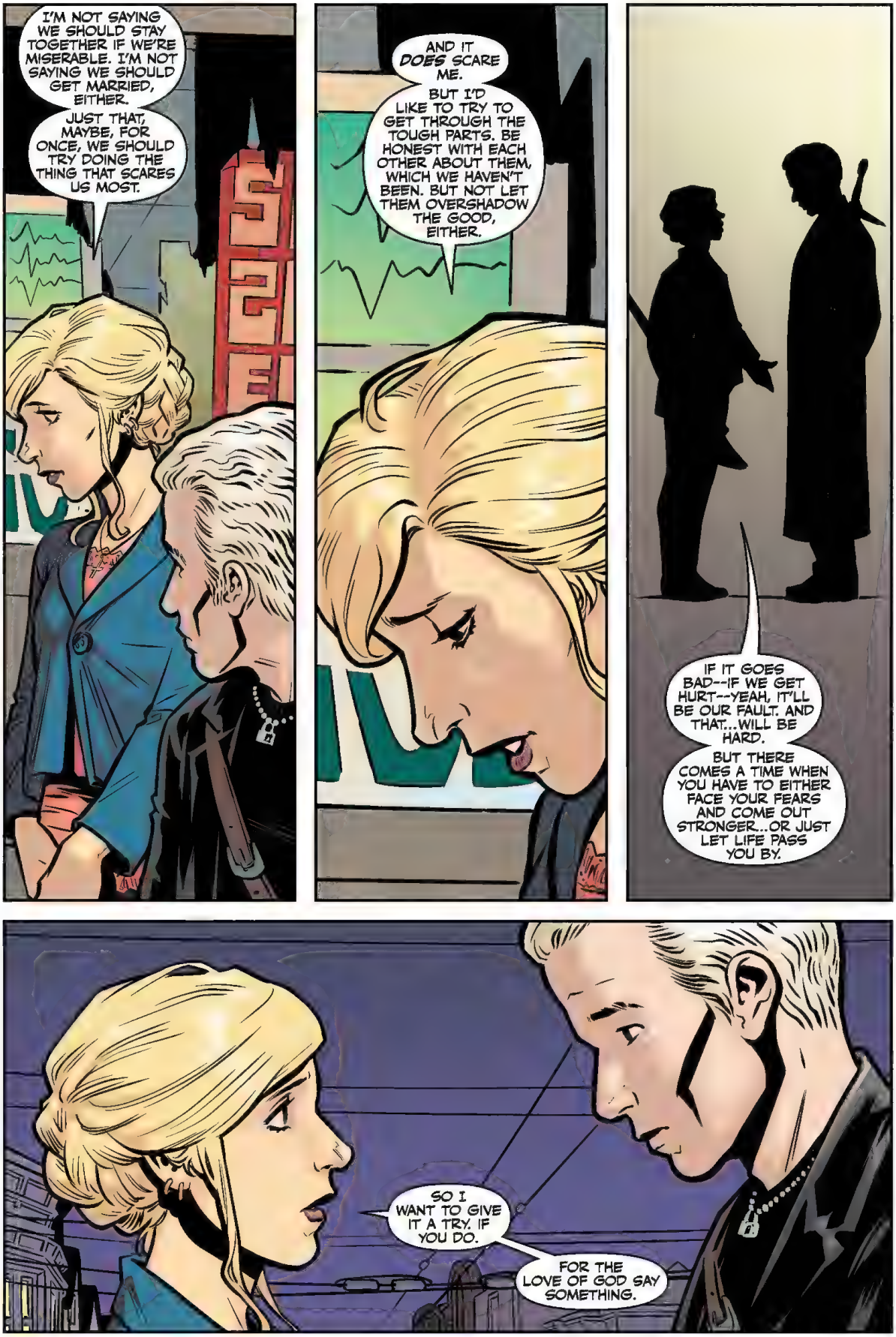

AND IF THERE'S A LARGER CONTEXT WITH YOUR *OTHER* "SO-CALLED FRIENDS," TOO.

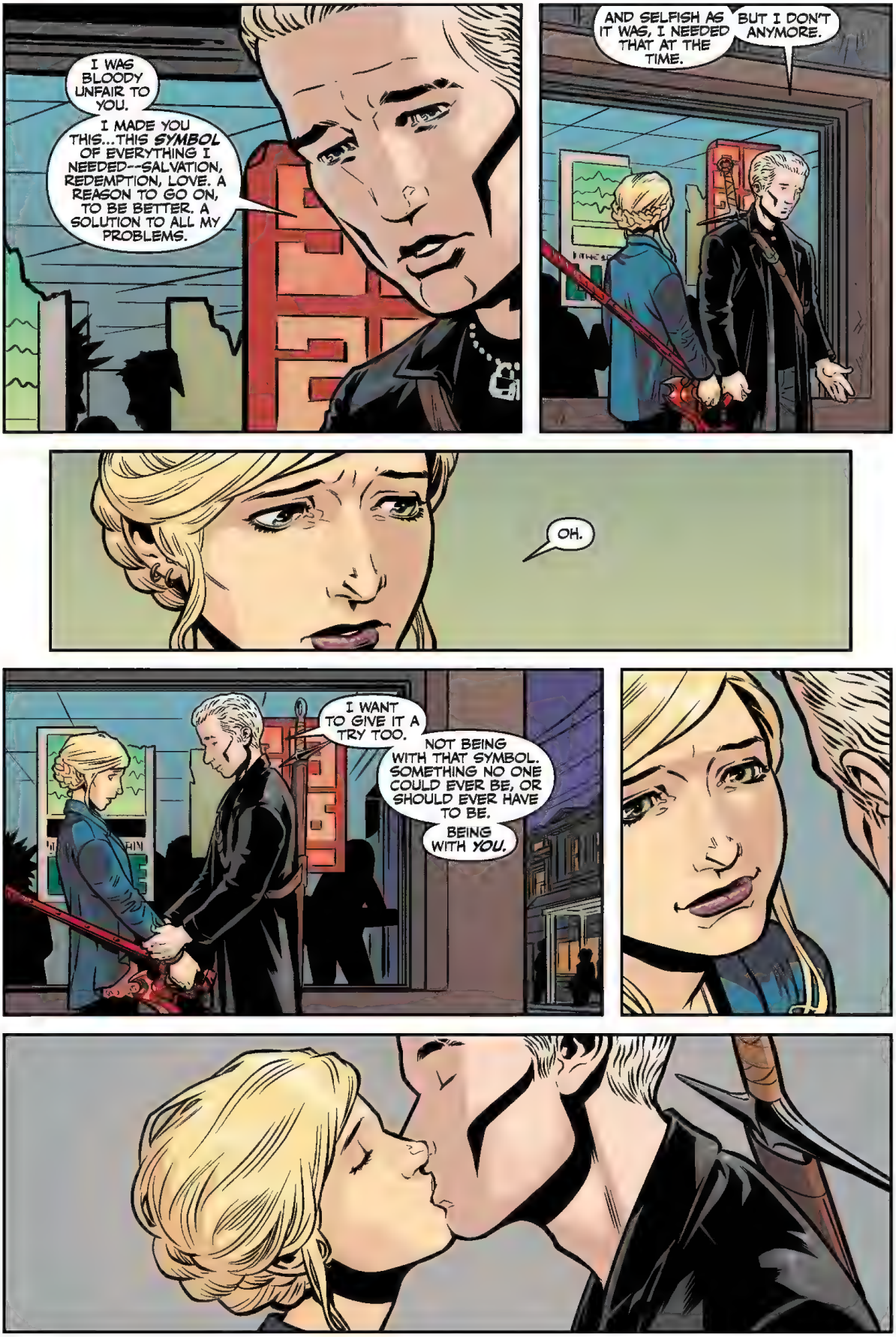
SLAUGHTERWORLD.
THE LEGEND WAS TRUE. THE AMULET OF REVELATION IS SHOWING ME WHERE THE PORTALS LEAD. WE'RE NOT STABBING IN THE DARK ANYMORE!
GREAT! SPEAKING OF STABBING, CAN WE MAKE LIKE A BANANA AND SPLIT BEFORE ANOTHER WAVE OF RAVENOUS DEMONS ATTACK?

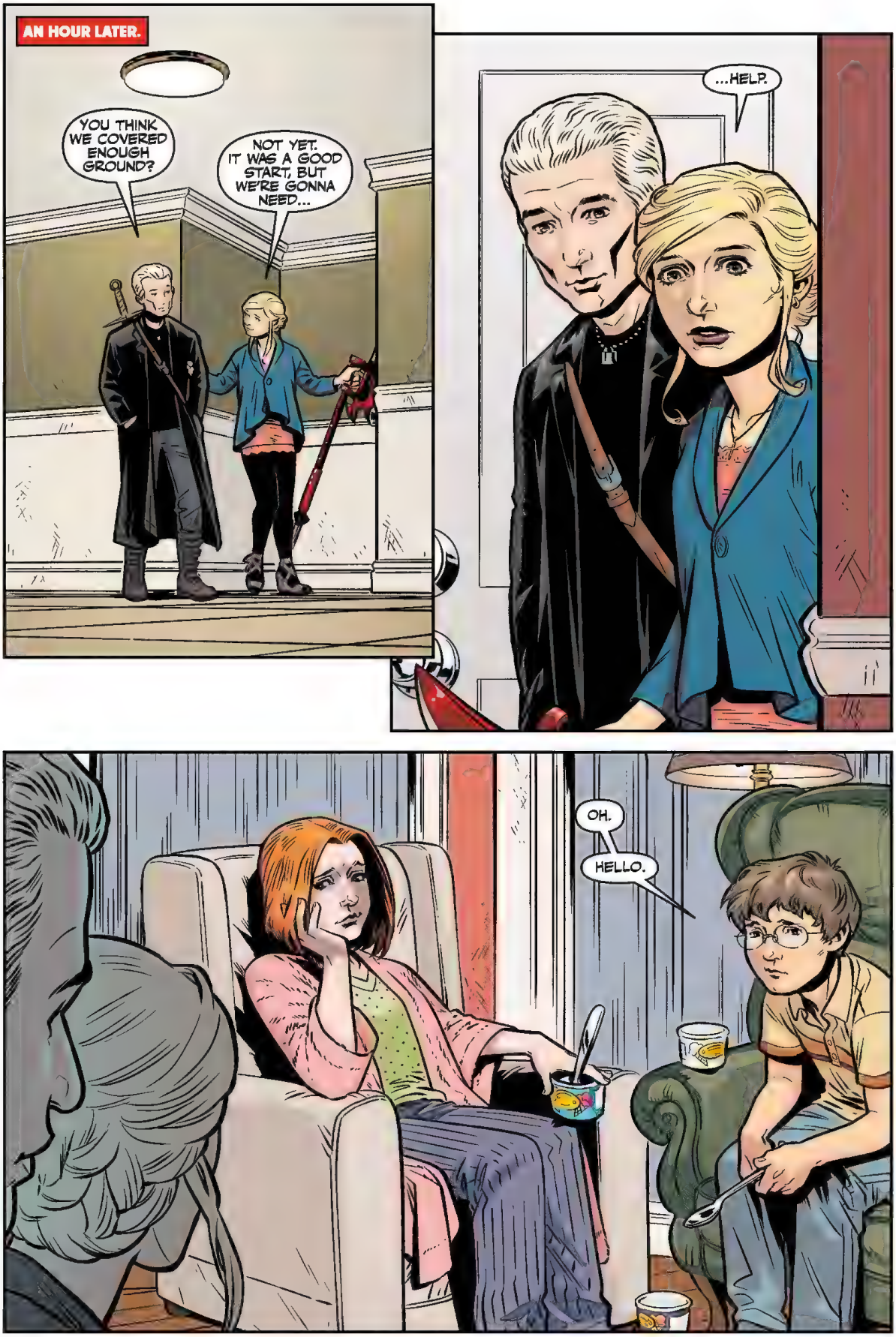

BODACEIA.
THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING, MY FRIENDS. I CAN'T ABANDON A WORLD THAT'S LOST ALL ITS MEN WHEN I HAVE THE POWER TO HELP REPOPULATE IT.
TOTALLY GET IT. AND IT HAS TO BE YOU, BECAUSE I NEVER FOR ONE SECOND CONSIDERED VOLUNTEERING MYSELF. REALLY.

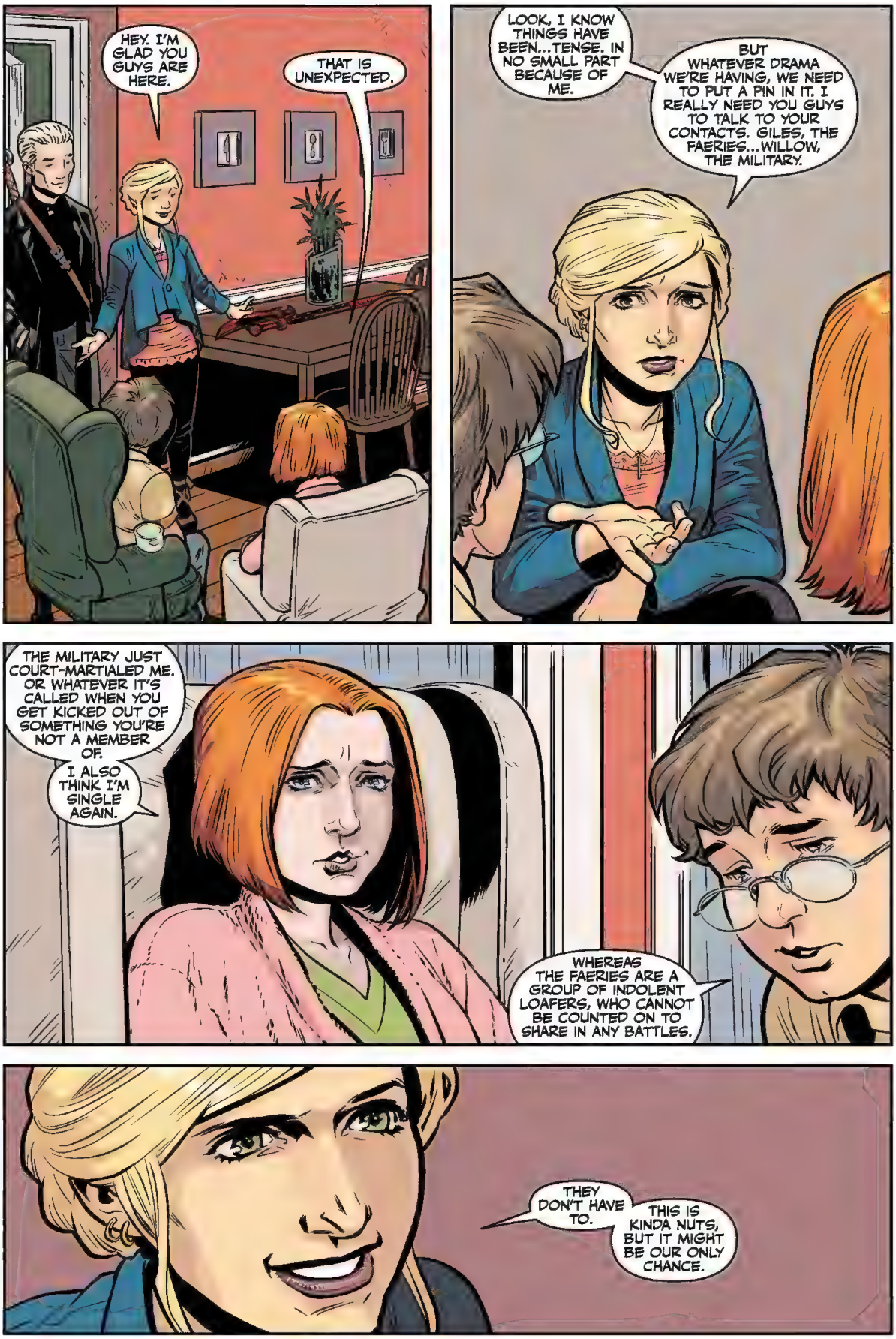

TRIPTOPIA.
ARE YOU REALLY THIS HORNY ALL THE TIME?
GREAT QUESTION--BUT HEY! I HAVE THE KEY POWERS NOW, AND I SAY WE NEED TO GO THROUGH THIS PORTAL NOW!
THE DIMENSION OF DARKEST FEAR.
YOU'RE NOT REAL AT ALL. WE MADE YOU. WE KNOW.
IT'S YOUR FAULT I DIED, DAWNIE. DEEP DOWN, YOU KNOW THAT.
YOU'RE RIGHT ON TRACK TO END UP LIKE ME, SON! ISN'T THAT GREAT?
JUST LEAVE HER. LIKE YOU ABANDONED ME, TIME AFTER TIME.
I...CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS.
PORTAL'S JUST UP AHEAD. LEAN ON ME.
AND I'LL LEAN ON YOU.

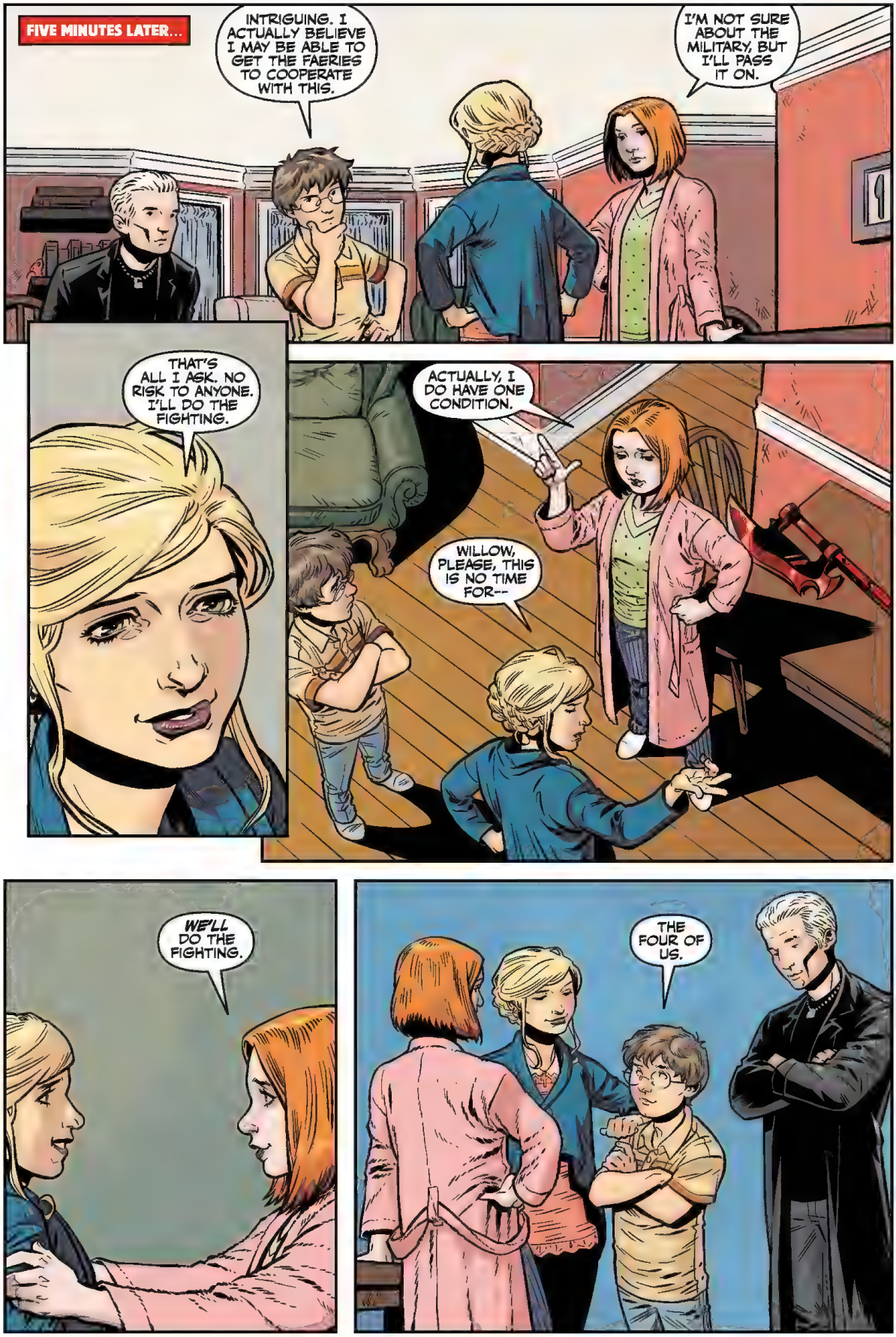

CLUB COAGULATE.
OKAY, YOU CONVINCED ME. LONG AS I DON'T HAVE TO, Y'KNOW, ACTUALLY DO MUCH OF ANYTHING.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND COOPERATION.
TA, VICKI.
BURPWIZER
BEERS
SO LIKE I WAS SAYING BEFORE...
CHEERS FOR WAITING TILL WE WERE OUT OF THE CLUB.
I'VE BEEN USING OUR TREK TO THINK. A LOT. IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS, DOWN PATHS I USUALLY AVOID.
AND I THINK YOU AND ME...
...IS SOMETHING I DON'T WANT TO LOSE WITHOUT A FIGHT.

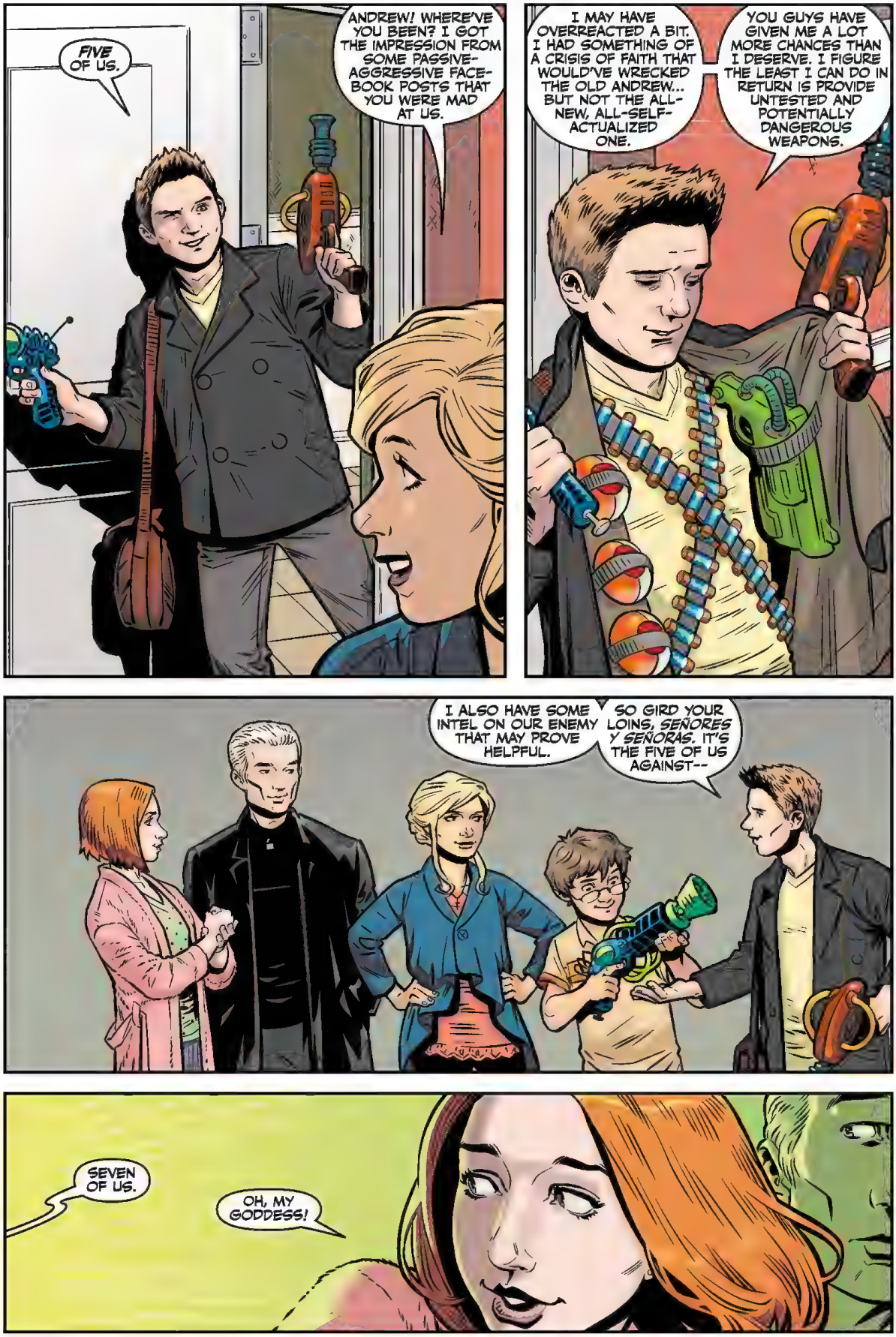

I'M NOT SAYING WE SHOULD STAY TOGETHER IF WE'RE MISERABLE. I'M NOT SAYING WE SHOULD GET MARRIED, EITHER.
JUST THAT, MAYBE, FOR ONCE, WE SHOULD TRY DOING THE THING THAT SCARES US MOST.
AND IT *DOES* SCARE ME.
BUT I'D LIKE TO TRY TO GET THROUGH THE TOUGH PARTS. BE HONEST WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT THEM, WHICH WE HAVEN'T BEEN. BUT NOT LET THEM OVERSHADOW THE GOOD, EITHER.
IF IT GOES BAD--IF WE GET HURT--YEAH, IT'LL BE OUR FAULT. AND THAT...WILL BE HARD.
BUT THERE COMES A TIME WHEN YOU HAVE TO EITHER FACE YOUR FEARS AND COME OUT STRONGER...OR JUST LET LIFE PASS YOU BY.
SO I WANT TO GIVE IT A TRY. IF YOU DO.
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD SAY SOMETHING.


I WAS BLOODY UNFAIR TO YOU.
I MADE YOU THIS...THIS SYMBOL OF EVERYTHING I NEEDED--SALVATION, REDEMPTION, LOVE. A REASON TO GO ON, TO BE BETTER. A SOLUTION TO ALL MY PROBLEMS.
AND SELFISH AS IT WAS, I NEEDED THAT AT THE TIME.
BUT I DON'T ANYMORE.
OH.
I WANT TO GIVE IT A TRY TOO.
NOT BEING WITH THAT SYMBOL. SOMETHING NO ONE COULD EVER BE, OR SHOULD EVER HAVE TO BE.
BEING WITH YOU.

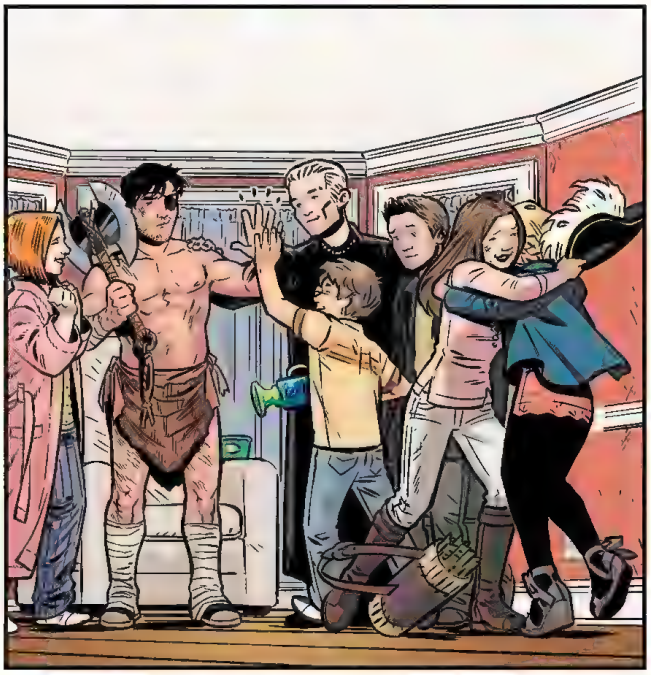

AN HOUR LATER.
YOU THINK WE COVERED ENOUGH GROUND?
NOT YET. IT WAS A GOOD START, BUT WE'RE GONNA NEED...
...HELP.
OH.
HELLO.

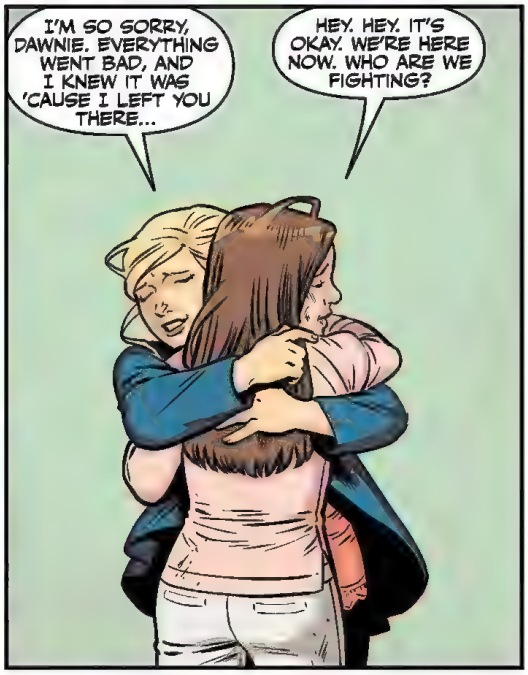

HEY. I'M GLAD YOU GUYS ARE HERE.
THAT IS UNEXPECTED.
LOOK, I KNOW THINGS HAVE BEEN...TENSE. IN NO SMALL PART BECAUSE OF ME.
BUT WHATEVER DRAMA WE'RE HAVING, WE NEED TO PUT A PIN IN IT. I REALLY NEED YOU GUYS TO TALK TO YOUR CONTACTS. GILES, THE FAERIES...WILLOW, THE MILITARY.
THE MILITARY JUST COURT-MARTIALED ME. OR WHATEVER IT'S CALLED WHEN YOU GET KICKED OUT OF SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER OF.
I ALSO THINK I'M SINGLE AGAIN.
WHEREAS THE FAERIES ARE A GROUP OF INDOLENT LOAFERS, WHO CANNOT BE COUNTED ON TO SHARE IN ANY BATTLES.
THEY DON'T HAVE TO.
THIS IS KINDA NUTS, BUT IT MIGHT BE OUR ONLY CHANCE.

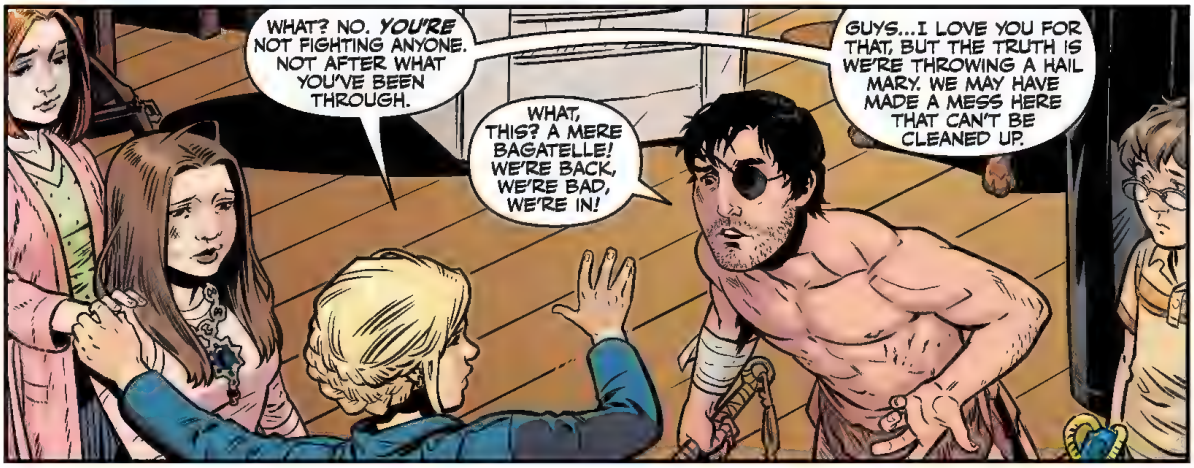

FIVE MINUTES LATER...
INTRIGUING. I ACTUALLY BELIEVE I MAY BE ABLE TO GET THE FAERIES TO COOPERATE WITH THIS.
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THE MILITARY, BUT I'LL PASS IT ON.
THAT'S ALL I ASK. NO RISK TO ANYONE. I'LL DO THE FIGHTING.
ACTUALLY, I DO HAVE ONE CONDITION.
WILLOW, PLEASE, THIS IS NO TIME FOR--
WE'LL DO THE FIGHTING.
THE FOUR OF US.

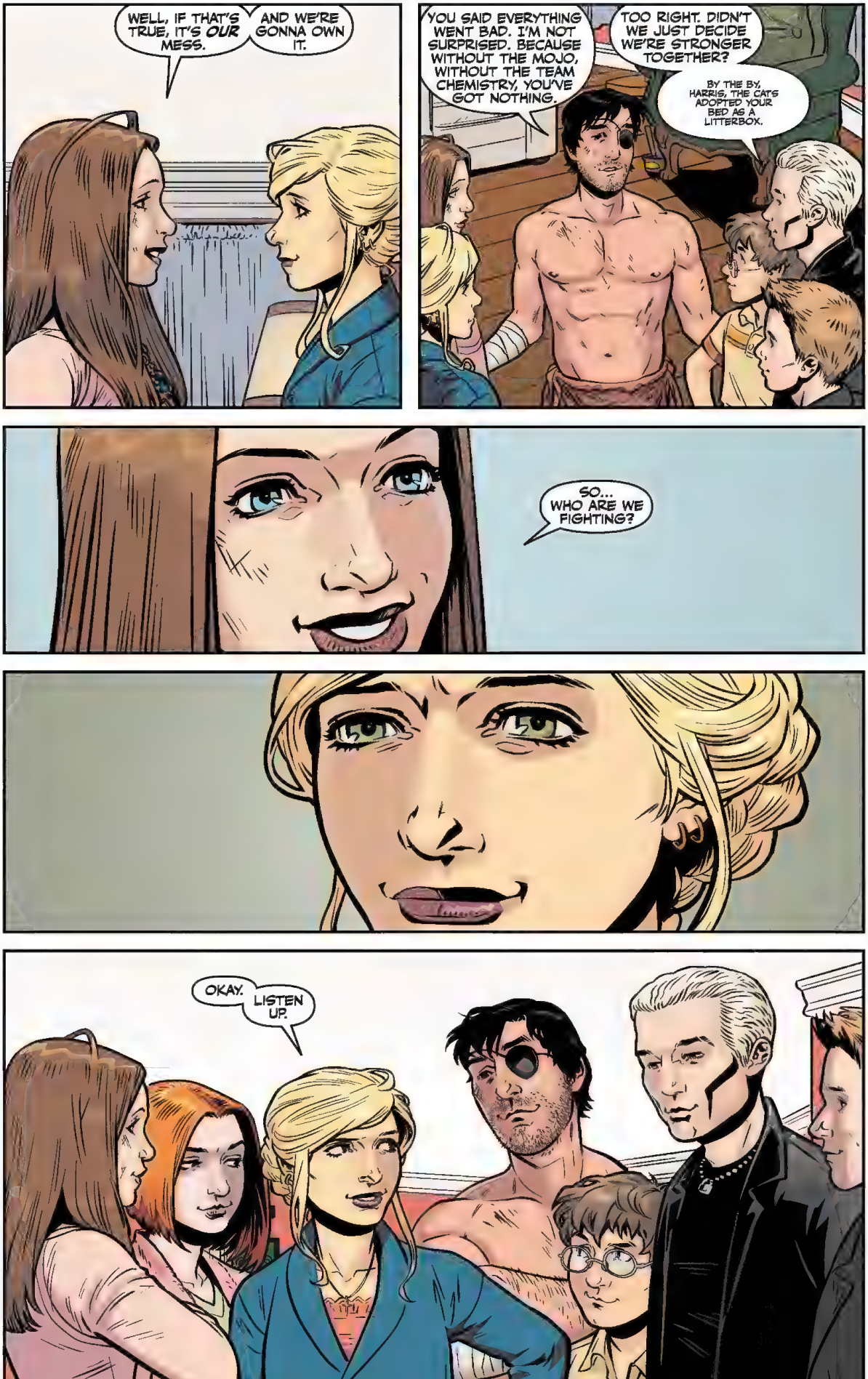

FIVE OF US.
ANDREW! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? I GOT THE IMPRESSION FROM SOME PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE FACE-BOOK POSTS THAT YOU WERE MAD AT US.
I MAY HAVE OVERREACTED A BIT. I HAD SOMETHING OF A CRISIS OF FAITH THAT WOULD'VE WRECKED THE OLD ANDREW... BUT NOT THE ALL-NEW, ALL-SELF-ACTUALIZED ONE.
YOU GUYS HAVE GIVEN ME A LOT MORE CHANCES THAN I DESERVE. I FIGURE THE LEAST I CAN DO IN RETURN IS PROVIDE UNTESTED AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS WEAPONS.
I ALSO HAVE SOME INTEL ON OUR ENEMY THAT MAY PROVE HELPFUL.
SO GIRD YOUR LOINS, *SEÑORES Y SEÑORAS.* IT'S THE FIVE OF US AGAINST--
SEVEN OF US.
OH, MY GODDESS!

WE GOT IMPATIENT.



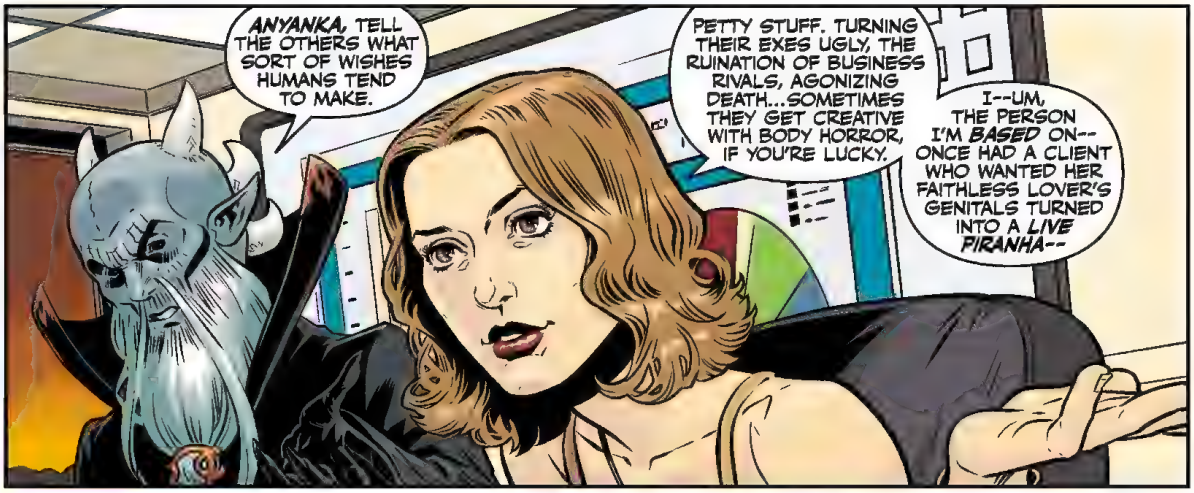

I'M SO SORRY, DAWNIE. EVERYTHING WENT BAD, AND I KNEW IT WAS 'CAUSE I LEFT YOU THERE...
HEY. HEY. IT'S OKAY. WE'RE HERE NOW. WHO ARE WE FIGHTING?

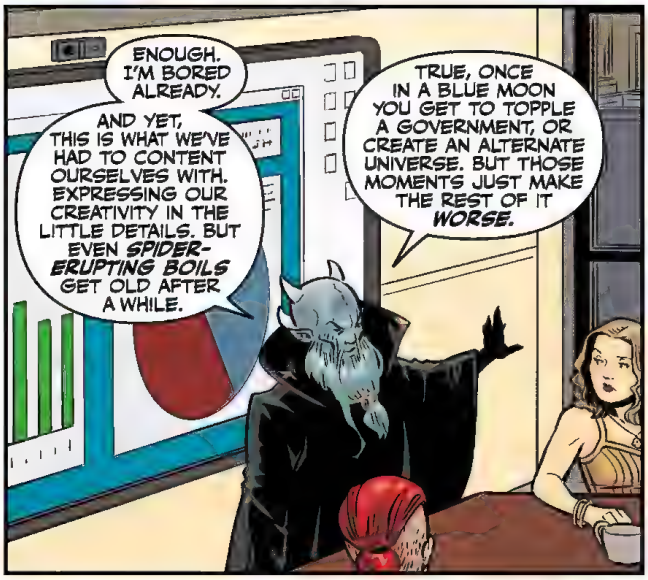

WHAT? NO. YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING ANYONE. NOT AFTER WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH.
WHAT, THIS? A MERE BAGATELLE! WE'RE BACK, WE'RE BAD, WE'RE IN!
GUYS...I LOVE YOU FOR THAT, BUT THE TRUTH IS WE'RE THROWING A HAIL MARY. WE MAY HAVE MADE A MESS HERE THAT CAN'T BE CLEANED UP.


WELL, IF THAT'S TRUE, IT'S OUR MESS.
AND WE'RE GONNA OWN IT.
YOU SAID EVERYTHING WENT BAD. I'M NOT SURPRISED. BECAUSE WITHOUT THE MOJO, WITHOUT THE TEAM CHEMISTRY, YOU'VE GOT NOTHING.
TOO RIGHT. DIDN'T WE JUST DECIDE WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER?
BY THE BY, HARRIS, THE CAT'S ADOPTED YOUR BED AS A LITTERBOX.
SO... WHO ARE WE FIGHTING?
OKAY. LISTEN UP.

OWN IT
PART 4: VENGEANCE
THE HELL DIMENSION OF ARASHMAHARR. HOME DIMENSION OF D'HOFFRYN. VENGEANCE, L.L.C., OFFICE PARK.
WHAT IS IT TO BE A VENGEANCE DEMON?
DAYS
POWER.

WE CAN ALTER REALITY. TRAVEL THROUGH TIME AND SPACE. EVEN, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, RETURN THE DEAD TO LIFE.
BUT WITH ONE CRUCIAL LIMITATION.
WE CANNOT DO THESE THINGS OF OUR OWN VOLITION.
WE REQUIRE THE *WISH OF A HUMAN* TO ACT UPON.
I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH I *HATE* THAT.


ANYANKA, TELL THE OTHERS WHAT SORT OF WISHES HUMANS TEND TO MAKE.
PETTY STUFF. TURNING THEIR EXES UGLY, THE RUINATION OF BUSINESS RIVALS, AGONIZING DEATH...SOMETIMES THEY GET CREATIVE WITH BODY HORROR, IF YOU'RE LUCKY.
I--UM, THE PERSON I'M BASED ON--ONCE HAD A CLIENT WHO WANTED HER FAITHLESS LOVER'S GENITALS TURNED INTO A LIVE PIRANHA--


ENOUGH. I'M BORED ALREADY.
AND YET, THIS IS WHAT WE'VE HAD TO CONTENT OURSELVES WITH. EXPRESSING OUR CREATIVITY IN THE LITTLE DETAILS. BUT EVEN SPIDER-ERUPTING BOILS GET OLD AFTER A WHILE.
TRUE, ONCE IN A BLUE MOON YOU GET TO TOPPLE A GOVERNMENT, OR CREATE AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE. BUT THOSE MOMENTS JUST MAKE THE REST OF IT WORSE.

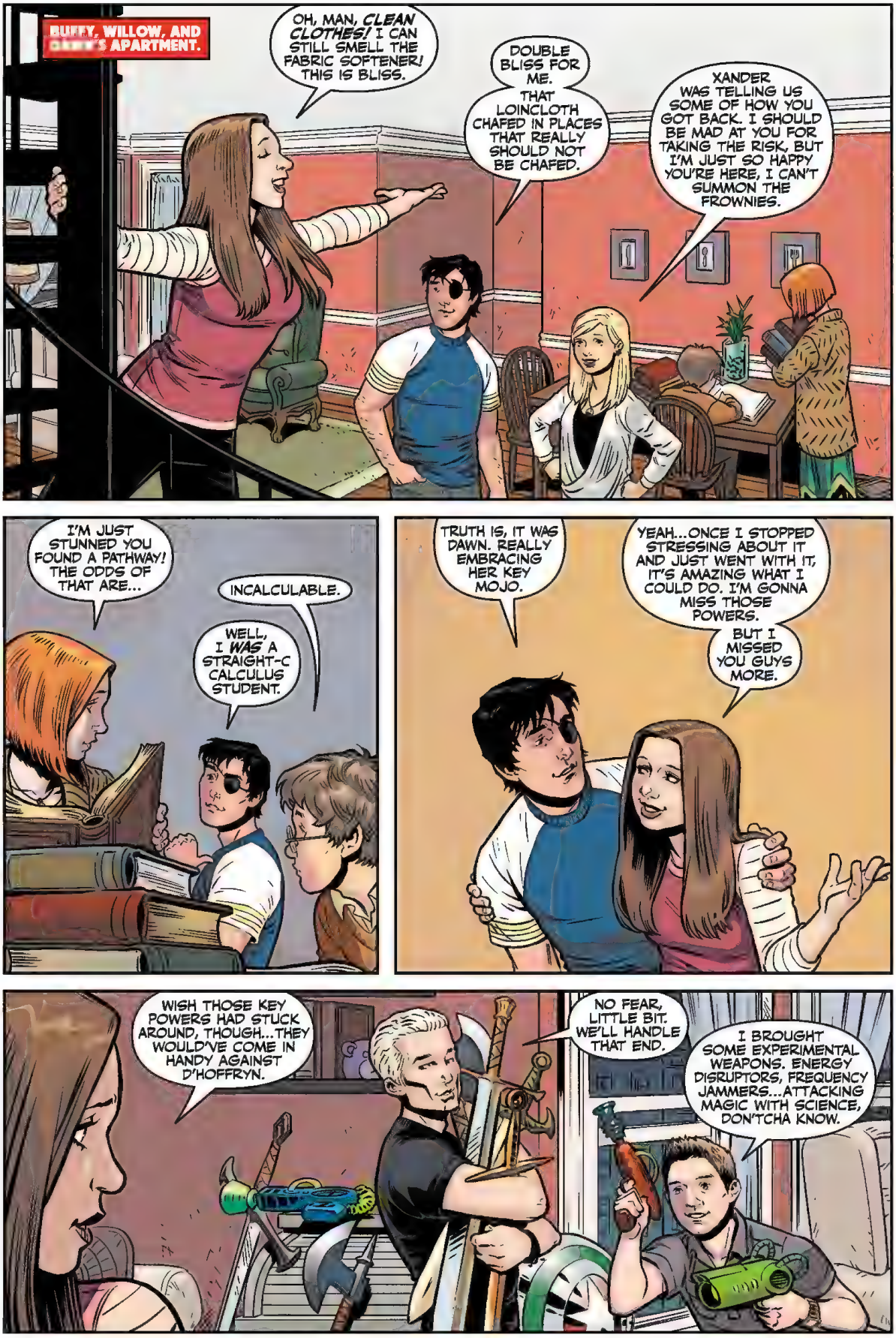
CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE?
HAVING THE POWER TO LITERALLY DO ANYTHING...YET ONLY FREE TO USE IT IN THE SERVICE OF THE SMALLEST, PETTIEST MINDS?

BUT NOW. AT LAST. I AM GOING TO REMOVE THOSE LIMITATIONS.
VAMPYR

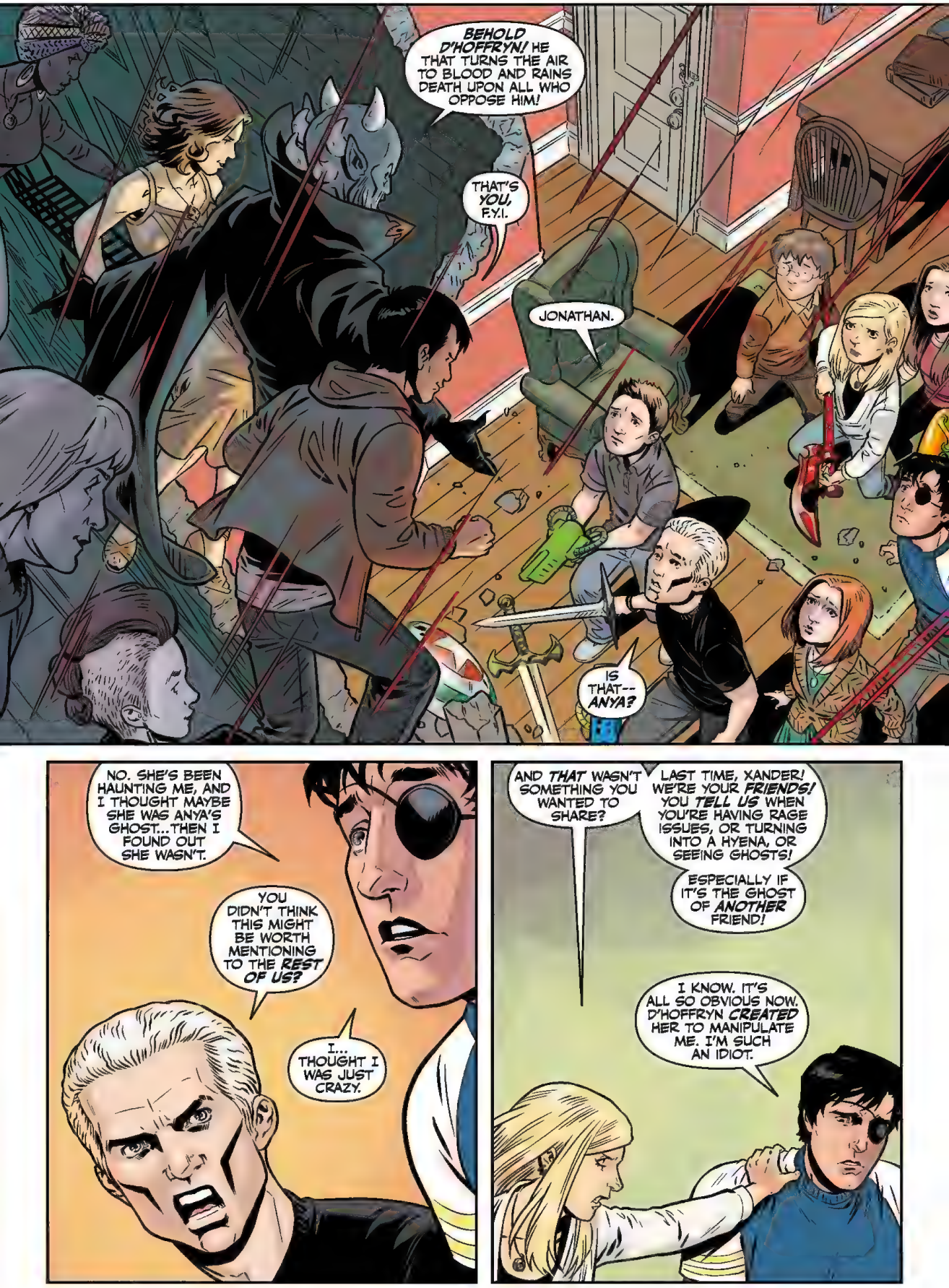
QUESTION, MR., UH, D'HOFFRYN? I KNOW WE HAVE THE RESTRICTIONS YOU MENTIONED, BUT I KINDA ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU COULD ALREADY DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED.

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION, JONATHAN. YES, I'M STRONG...BEING LORD OF A HELL DIMENSION HAS ITS PERKS. BUT POWER IS LIKE CHOCOLATE. THE MORE YOU TASTE, THE MORE YOU CRAVE.
I HAVE FINALLY STRIPPED AWAY THE LAST OF WILLOW'S PROTECTIONS ON THE *VAMPYR* BOOK. WHAT I WRITE WITHIN--THE ***ELIMINATION*** OF ALL OUR RESTRICTIONS--SHALL BECOME MAGICAL LAW.
MPH!
AND ULTIMATE POWER WILL BE OURS TO COMMAND.
SPLAT
THAT'S ODD. I RESEARCHED THIS METICULOUSLY. CHOSE THE WORDS PERFECTLY.
LET ME REPHRASE.
SPLAT
FNNFF!
UM, ALLERGIES. THE TWIN SUNS...DRY HEAT ALWAYS GETS MY MUCUS GOING.

IMPOSSIBLE. IMPOSSIBLE! SOMETHING IS WRONG!
DIDN'T YOU TRICK BUFFY INTO GIVING YOU EXPANDED POWERS OF PERCEPTION WHEN IT COMES TO MAGIC STUFF?
YES, I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GO THERE. GOOD HUSTLE, THOUGH, ANYANKA.
AH. I BEGIN TO SEE.
IF YOU ALL BELIEVE D'HOFFRYN CAN'T MAKE CHANGES IN THE BOOK, THEN HE WON'T BE ABLE TO. THAT'S HOW IT WORKS. THE CONSENSUS OF ENOUGH MINDS WINS OUT.
AND IF YOU JUST DO THAT, I HAVE A SHOT AT BEATING HIM!
WELL PLAYED, SLAYER. WELL PLAYED INDEED. CONVINCING THE WEAK-WILLED MASSES YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY DEFEAT ME.
HOWEVER, THERE IS A SIMPLE WAY TO COUNTER THAT.
DESTROYING YOU UTTERLY!
KRAK
ABOOOOM
THAT WON'T SCARE OFF THE TACO TRUCK, RIGHT?

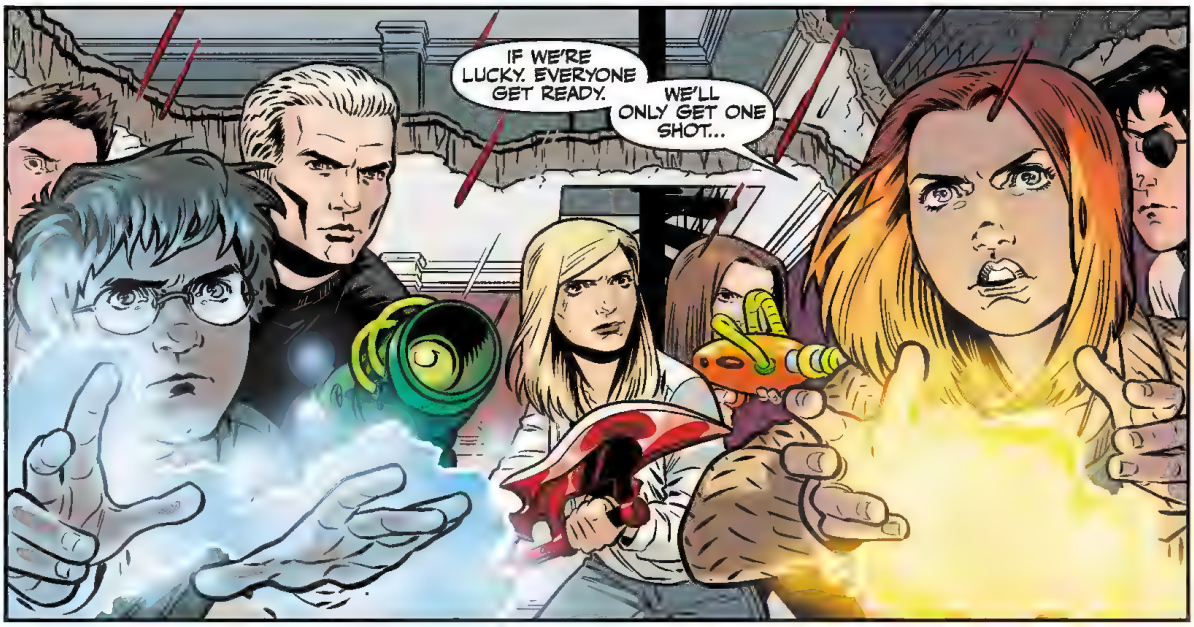

BUFFY, WILLOW, AND [illegible]'S APARTMENT.
OH, MAN, CLEAN CLOTHES! I CAN STILL SMELL THE FABRIC SOFTENER! THIS IS BLISS.
DOUBLE BLISS FOR ME. THAT LOINCLOTH CHAFED IN PLACES THAT REALLY SHOULD NOT BE CHAFED.
XANDER WAS TELLING US SOME OF HOW YOU GOT BACK. I SHOULD BE MAD AT YOU FOR TAKING THE RISK, BUT I'M JUST SO HAPPY YOU'RE HERE, I CAN'T SUMMON THE FROWNIES.
I'M JUST STUNNED YOU FOUND A PATHWAY! THE ODDS OF THAT ARE...
INCALCULABLE.
WELL, I WAS A STRAIGHT-C CALCULUS STUDENT.
TRUTH IS, IT WAS DAWN. REALLY EMBRACING HER KEY MOJO.
YEAH...ONCE I STOPPED STRESSING ABOUT IT AND JUST WENT WITH IT, IT'S AMAZING WHAT I COULD DO. I'M GONNA MISS THOSE POWERS.
BUT I MISSED YOU GUYS MORE.
WISH THOSE KEY POWERS HAD STUCK AROUND, THOUGH...THEY WOULD'VE COME IN HANDY AGAINST D'HOFFRYN.
NO FEAR, LITTLE BIT. WE'LL HANDLE THAT END.
I BROUGHT SOME EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONS. ENERGY DISRUPTORS, FREQUENCY JAMMERS...ATTACKING MAGIC WITH SCIENCE, DON'TCHA KNOW.

GILES, YOU REALLY THINK THESE'LL WORK?
ANDREW'S DEVICES ARE OUR BEST OPTION. MAGIC IS AN EXOTIC FORM OF ENERGY. AND, LIKE CONVENTIONAL ENERGY, IT CAN BE DISRUPTED...IN THEORY.
EVEN IF WE CAN JUST WEAKEN HIS PROTECTIONS, MY SCYTHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE HIM OUT.
IT WAS CREATED TO KILL *OLD ONES*. IT CAN HANDLE D'HOFFRYN. ALL I NEED IS ONE GOOD SHOT.
KRAKABOOM
EEK!
RELAX, WELLS. IT'S JUST BLOODY RAIN.
HANG ON. DO I SMELL--?
BLOODY RAIN. LITERALLY.
HE'S COMING!
SHBRNNCHHH


BEHOLD D'HOFFRYN! HE THAT TURNS THE AIR TO BLOOD AND RAINS DEATH UPON ALL WHO OPPOSE HIM!
THAT'S YOU, F.Y.I.
JONATHAN.
IS THAT-- ANYA?
NO. SHE'S BEEN HAUNTING ME, AND I THOUGHT MAYBE SHE WAS ANYA'S GHOST...THEN I FOUND OUT SHE WASN'T.
YOU DIDN'T THINK THIS MIGHT BE WORTH MENTIONING TO THE REST OF US?
I... THOUGHT I WAS JUST CRAZY.
AND THAT WASN'T SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO SHARE?
LAST TIME, XANDER! WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS! YOU TELL US WHEN YOU'RE HAVING RAGE ISSUES, OR TURNING INTO A HYENA, OR SEEING GHOSTS!
ESPECIALLY IF IT'S THE GHOST OF ANOTHER FRIEND!
I KNOW. IT'S ALL SO OBVIOUS NOW. D'HOFFRYN CREATED HER TO MANIPULATE ME. I'M SUCH AN IDIOT.

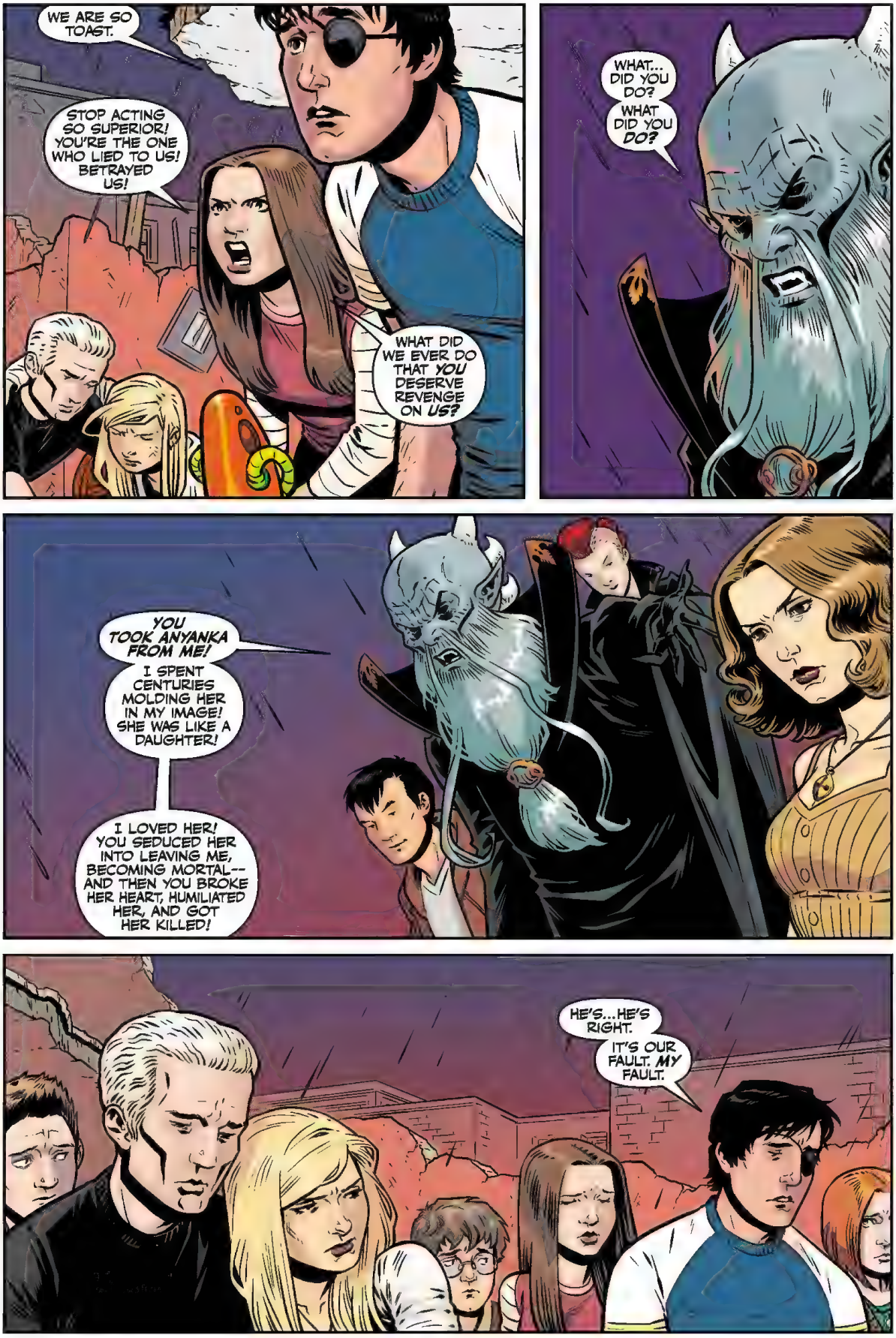
THEN I AM TOO. 'CAUSE HE WAS PLAYING US ALL.
AND WE WERE SO CONVINCED WE COULDN'T HANDLE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOOK--HELL, OF LIFE--WE ATE IT UP LIKE ICE CREAM.
THIS, RIGHT HERE... THIS WAS HIS PLAN FROM THE GET-GO.

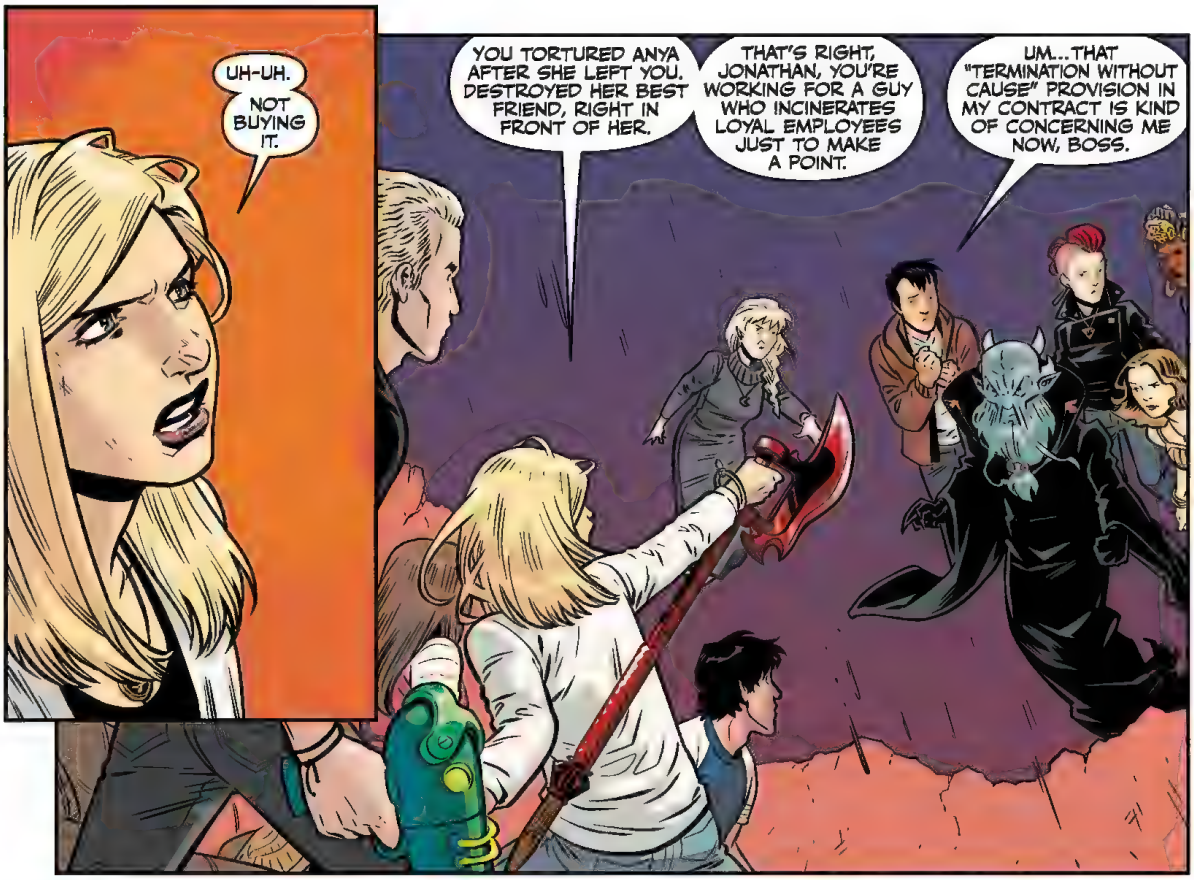
OF COURSE, YOU NAVEL-GAZING URCHINS. I AM A VENGEANCE DEMON! AND WHO DO I HAVE MORE CAUSE FOR REVENGE UPON THAN YOU?
MY COMPLIMENTS ON YOUR DEFENSIVE SPELLS, MISS ROSENBERG. I SEE YOU'VE CHANGED MY STATUS TO "UNWELCOME."
IT MAY TAKE ME ALL OF ONE MORE MINUTE TO DISMANTLE EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE HERE.


IF WE'RE LUCKY. EVERYONE GET READY.
WE'LL ONLY GET ONE SHOT...

PFAFF
NOW!
SHAKAASH
RAAA!

KNK
REALLY?
I EXPECTED BETTER.
BUT TO BE FAIR, WHY SHOULD I?
BRAK


WE ARE SO TOAST.
STOP ACTING SO SUPERIOR! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LIED TO US! BETRAYED US!
WHAT DID WE EVER DO THAT *YOU* DESERVE REVENGE ON *US*?
WHAT... DID YOU DO?
WHAT DID YOU *DO*?
YOU TOOK ANYANKA FROM ME!
I SPENT CENTURIES MOLDING HER IN MY IMAGE! SHE WAS LIKE A DAUGHTER!
I LOVED HER! YOU SEDUCED HER INTO LEAVING ME, BECOMING MORTAL-- AND THEN YOU BROKE HER HEART, HUMILIATED HER, AND GOT HER KILLED!
HE'S...HE'S RIGHT.
IT'S OUR FAULT. *MY* FAULT.

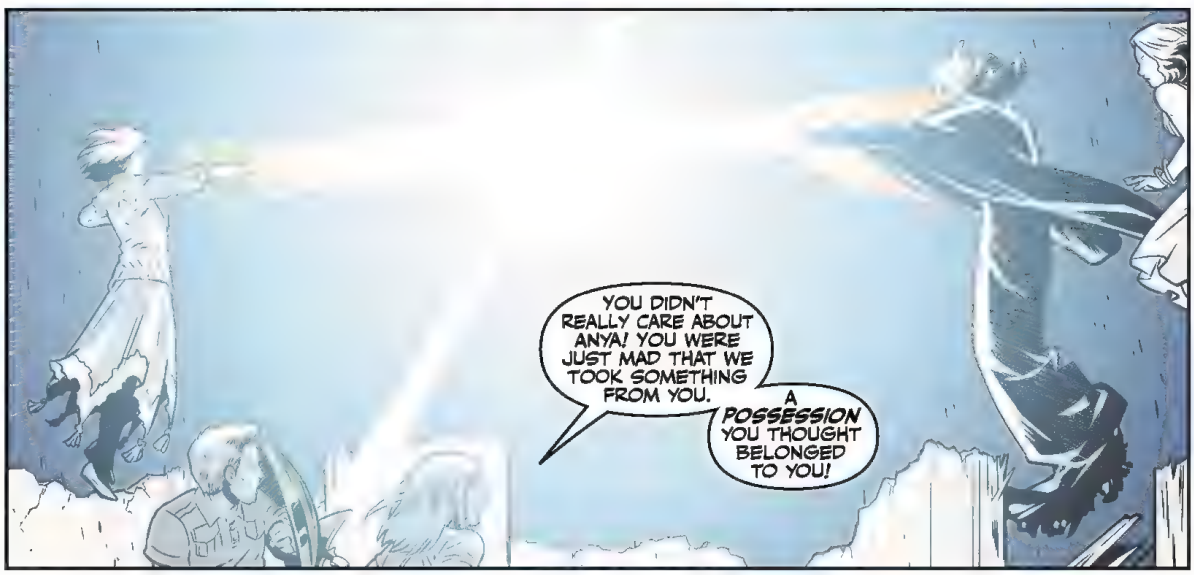

UH-UH.
NOT BUYING IT.
YOU TORTURED ANYA AFTER SHE LEFT YOU. DESTROYED HER BEST FRIEND, RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER.
THAT'S RIGHT, JONATHAN, YOU'RE WORKING FOR A GUY WHO INCINERATES LOYAL EMPLOYEES JUST TO MAKE A POINT.
UM...THAT "TERMINATION WITHOUT CAUSE" PROVISION IN MY CONTRACT IS KIND OF CONCERNING ME NOW, BOSS.

BUFFY'S RIGHT.
"NEVER GO FOR THE KILL WHEN YOU CAN GO FOR THE PAIN." ISN'T THAT WHAT HE USED TO SAY, ANYA?

AND ISN'T THAT EXACTLY WHAT HE DID TO YOU?

LIES AND DISTORTIONS.
IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO DIE NOW.

A DEATH I AM BROADCASTING TO ALL CORNERS OF THE MAGICAL WORLD!
WHEN THEY SEE YOU FALL, AND THE BOOK IN MY HANDS, THEIR BELIEF IN MY POWER WILL BE UNDENIABLE!


YOU DIDN'T REALLY CARE ABOUT ANYA! YOU WERE JUST MAD THAT WE TOOK SOMETHING FROM YOU.
A POSSESSION YOU THOUGHT BELONGED TO YOU!

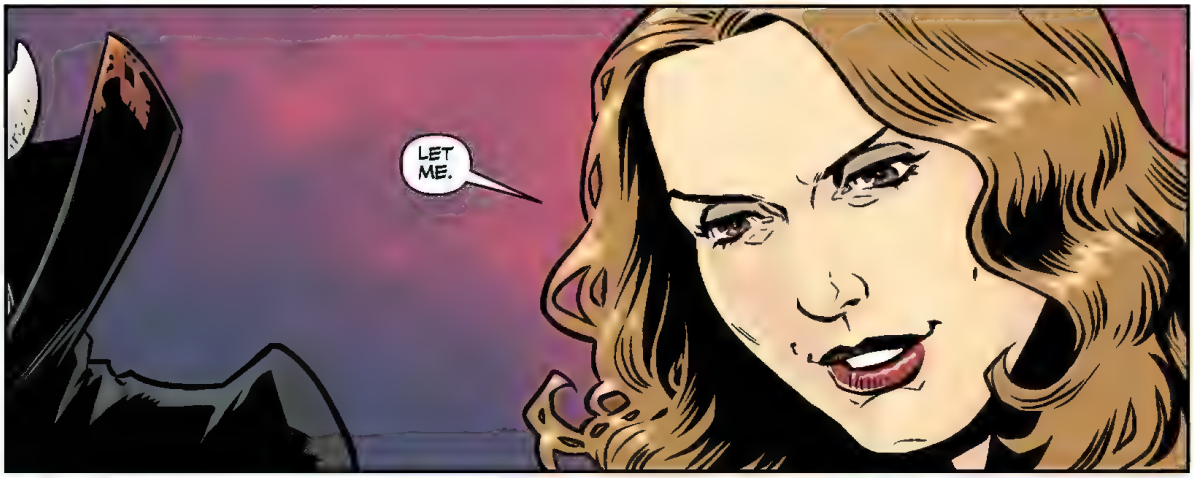
SILENCE THE SHREW.
YES, MASTER.

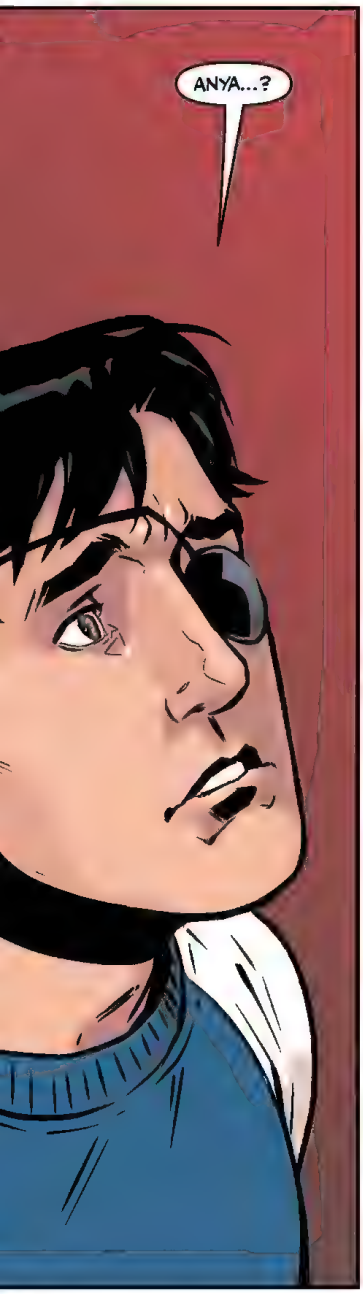
THIS WAS NEVER ABOUT ANYA. OR LOVE. YOU DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD.

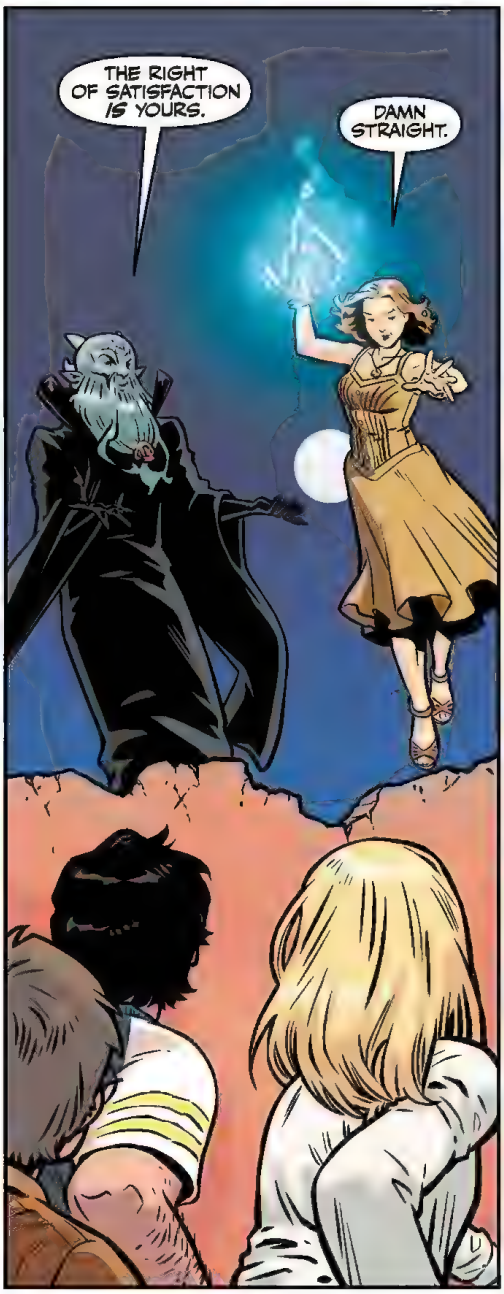
IT'S ALL ABOUT SELFISHNESS.
ALL ABOUT YOU.
URK!

ENOUGH!!
FRAASH
AAH!
WILLOW!
NNUHH...
GILES, HELP HER!
I HOPE YOU WERE ALL LISTENING TO THAT. BECAUSE EVERY WORD OF IT'S TRUE.
AND HE'D DO THE SAME TO YOU IN A HEARTBEAT.

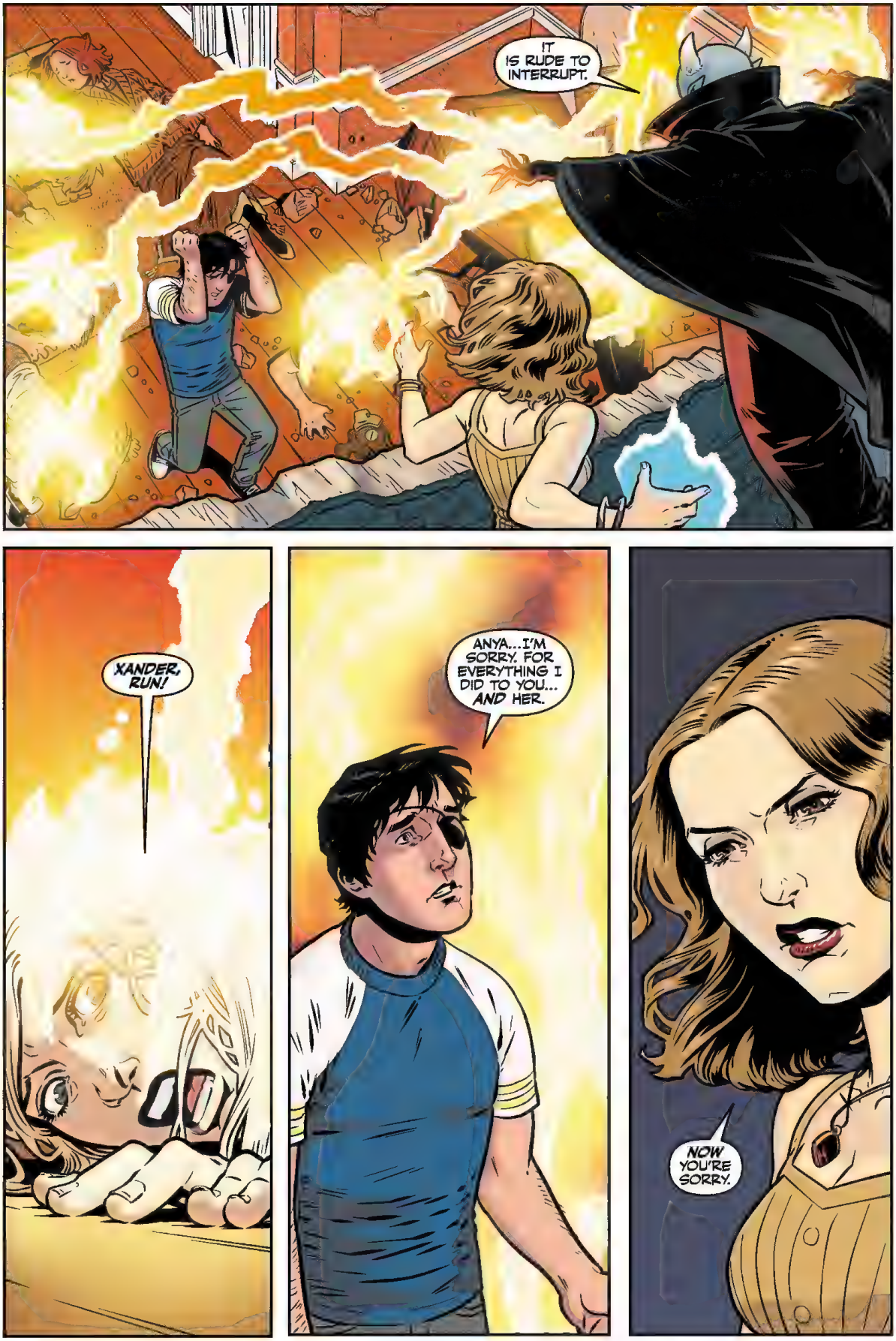
SLANDER AND CALUMNY.
I WAS TRYING TO SAVE ANYANKA, FROM THE FATE I KNEW WAS INEVITABLE. THE FATE THAT INDEED CAME TO PASS.
YOU COULD'VE USED YOUR POWER TO MAKE HER STRONGER. TRIED TO HELP HER BE HAPPY.
BUT NO. ALL YOU CARED ABOUT WAS CONTROLLING HER.
YOU HAVE JUST SEALED YOUR FATE, YOU USELESS TWIT.
I HAVE SO LOOKED FORWARD TO WATCHING YOU DIE.
MASTER, WAIT.

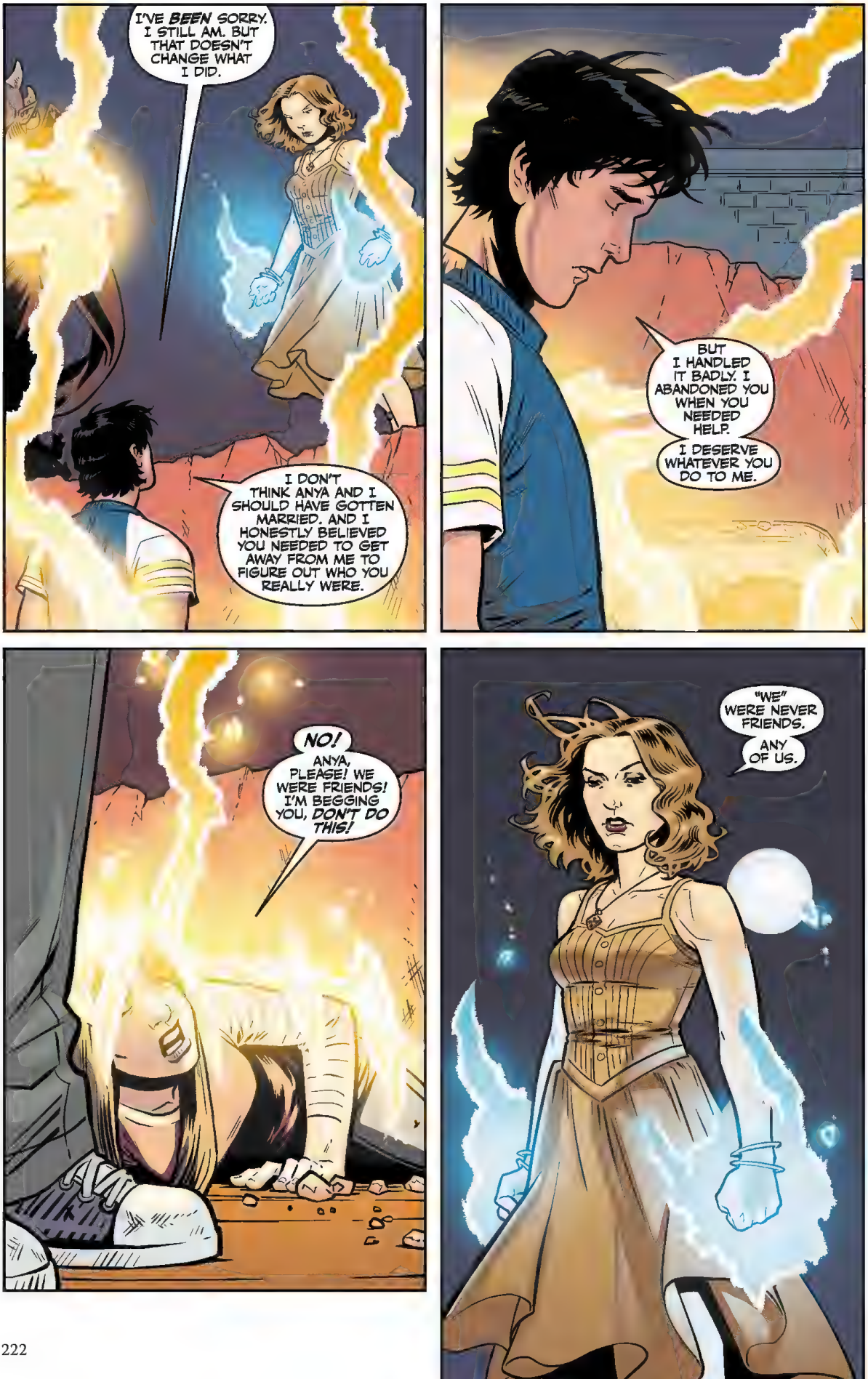

LET ME.


ANYA...?

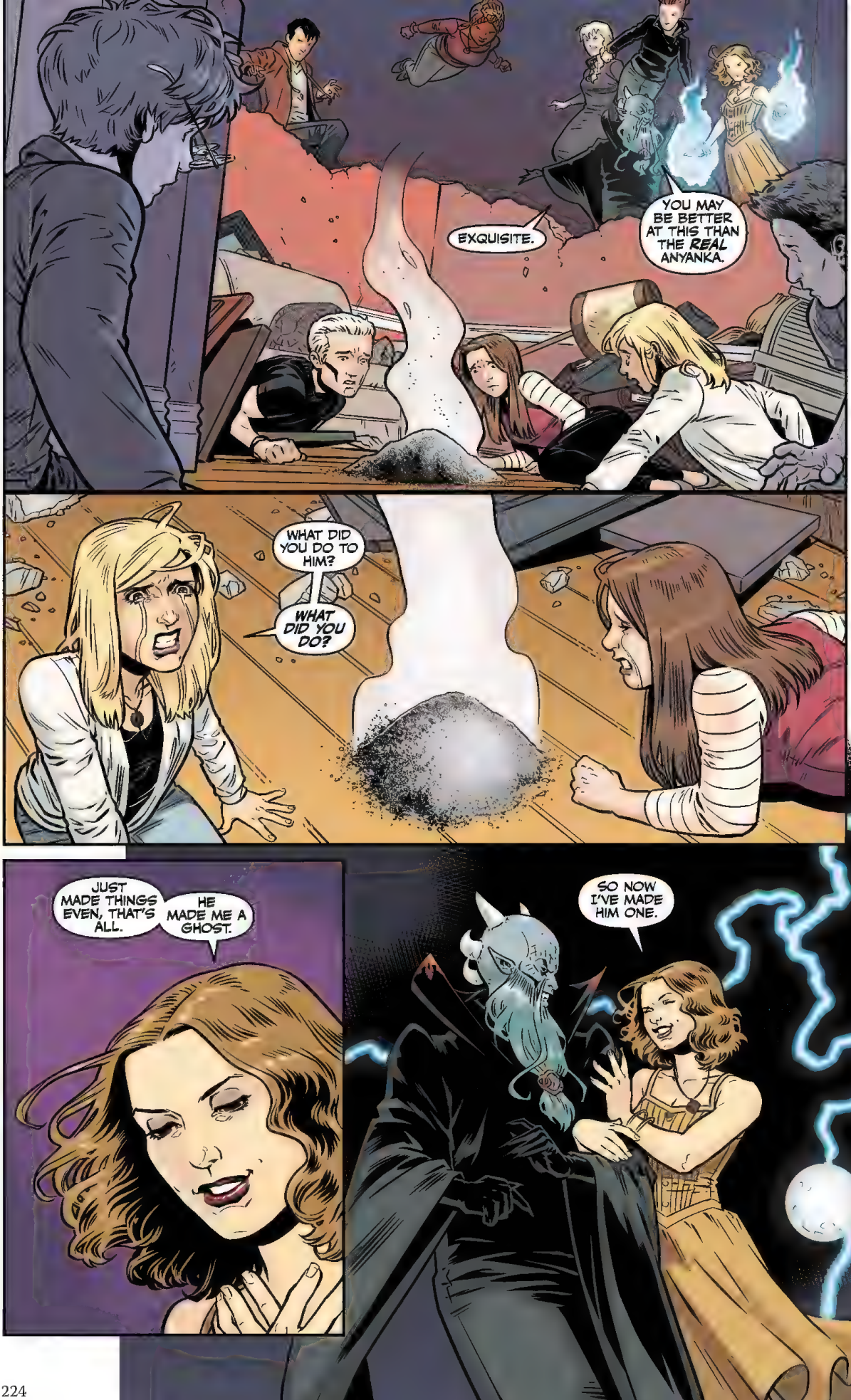

THE RIGHT OF SATISFACTION IS YOURS.
DAMN STRAIGHT.

GET HER! DON'T LET HER--

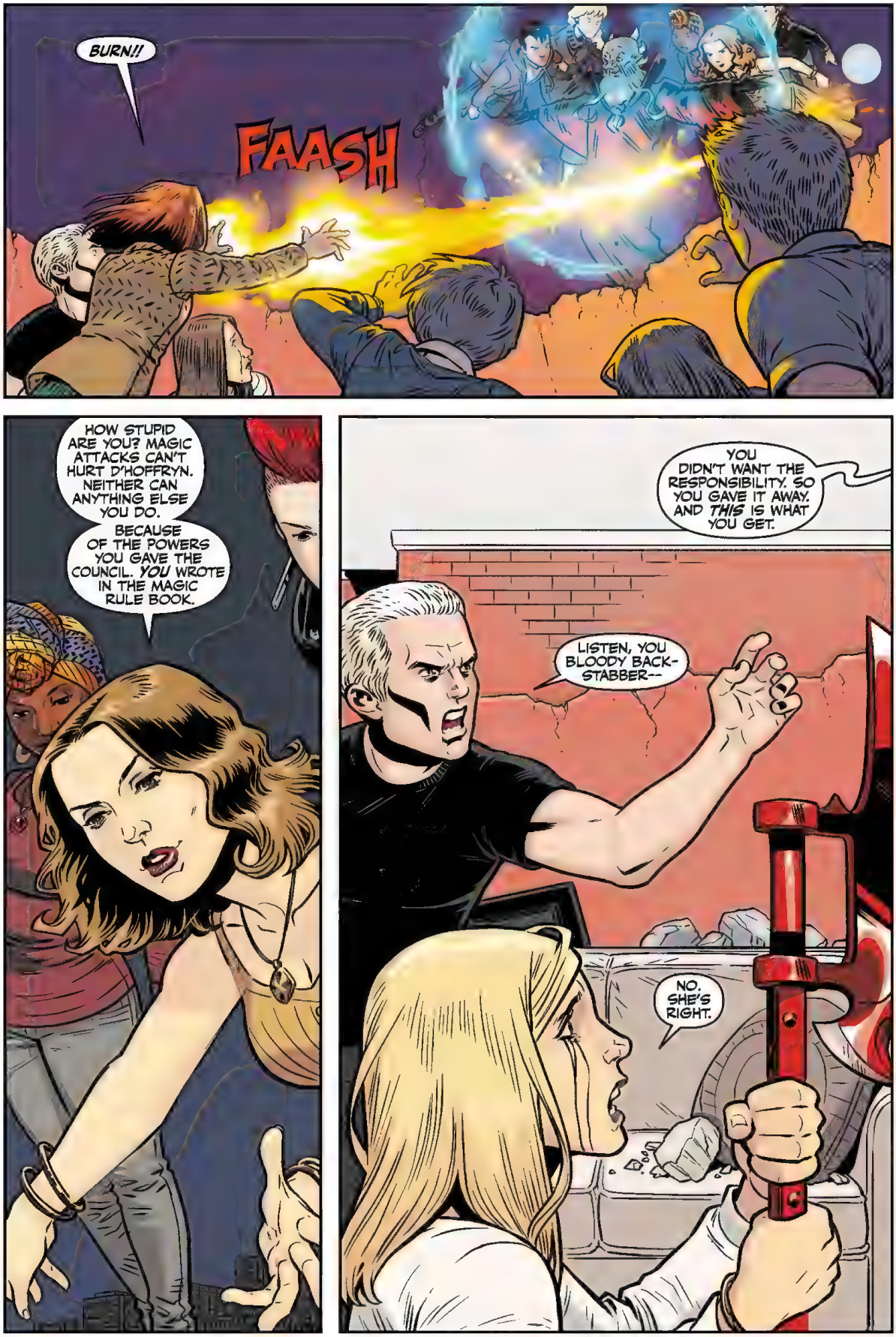

IT IS RUDE TO INTERRUPT.
XANDER, RUN!
ANYA...I'M SORRY. FOR EVERYTHING I DID TO YOU... AND HER.
NOW YOU'RE SORRY.


I'VE BEEN SORRY. I STILL AM. BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE WHAT I DID.
I DON'T THINK ANYA AND I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN MARRIED. AND I HONESTLY BELIEVED YOU NEEDED TO GET AWAY FROM ME TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU REALLY WERE.
BUT I HANDLED IT BADLY. I ABANDONED YOU WHEN YOU NEEDED HELP.
I DESERVE WHATEVER YOU DO TO ME.
NO! ANYA, PLEASE! WE WERE FRIENDS! I'M BEGGING YOU, DON'T DO THIS!
"WE" WERE NEVER FRIENDS.
ANY OF US.

NOOOO!
XANDER!
DAMN YOU!
FWASH


EXQUISITE.
YOU MAY BE BETTER AT THIS THAN THE REAL ANYANKA.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?
WHAT DID YOU DO?
JUST MADE THINGS EVEN, THAT'S ALL.
HE MADE ME A GHOST.
SO NOW I'VE MADE HIM ONE.

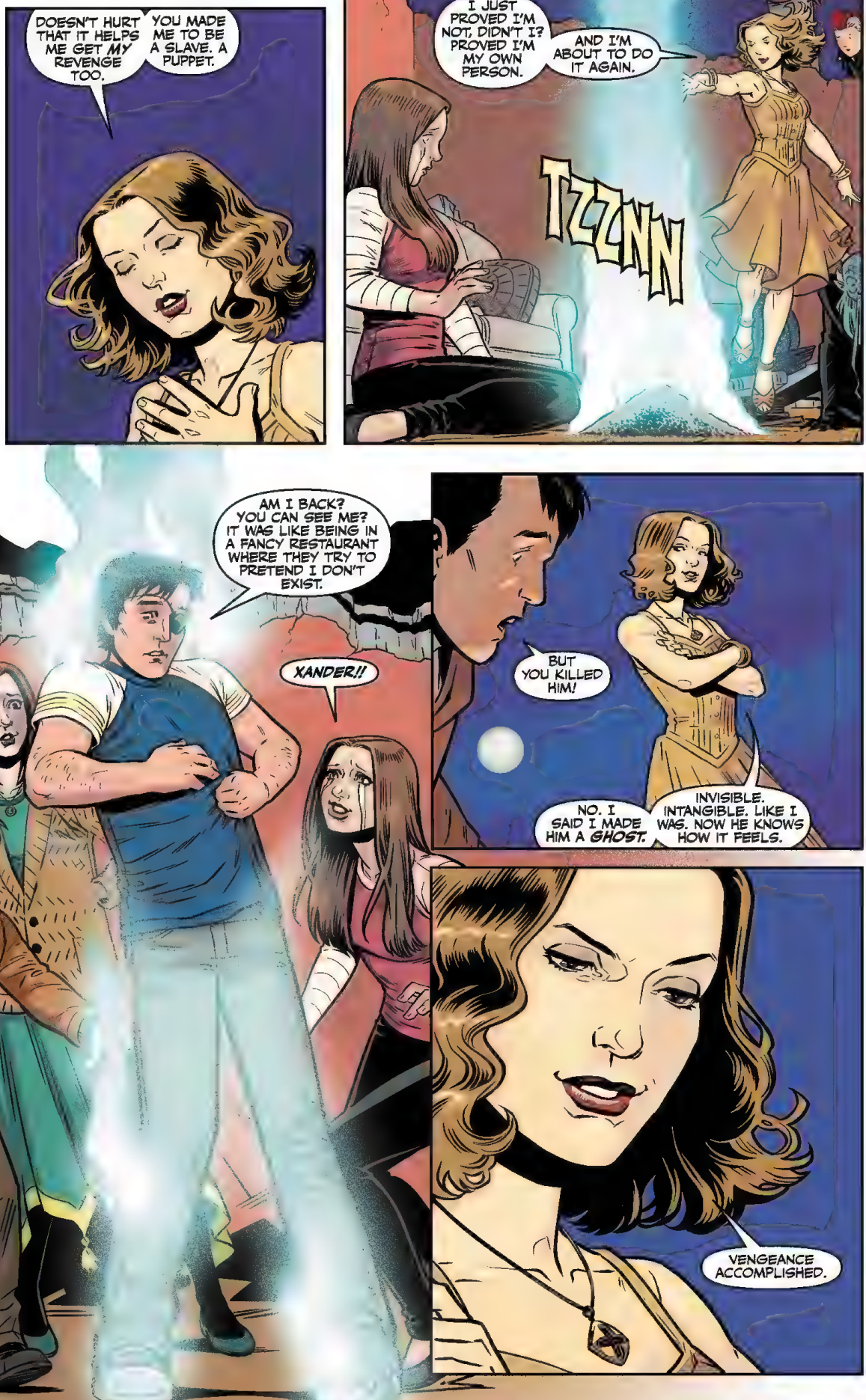
OWN IT
PART 5: IT'S ON YOU
XANDER, NO, NO, NO...
ANYA, YOU-- HOW COULD YOU--
SHE'S NOT REALLY ANYA.
BY SLAYING XANDER HARRIS BEFORE YOUR EYES...SHE HAS SURPASSED HER.


BURN!!
FAASH
HOW STUPID ARE YOU? MAGIC ATTACKS CAN'T HURT D'HOFFRYN. NEITHER CAN ANYTHING ELSE YOU DO.
BECAUSE OF THE POWERS YOU GAVE THE COUNCIL. YOU WROTE IN THE MAGIC RULE BOOK.
YOU DIDN'T WANT THE RESPONSIBILITY. SO YOU GAVE IT AWAY. AND THIS IS WHAT YOU GET.
LISTEN, YOU BLOODY BACK-STABBER--
NO, SHE'S RIGHT.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRUSTED D'HOFFRYN. EVER.
I SHOULD'VE TRUSTED MYSELF.
US.
I SAID IT AT THE START. I DON'T KNOW ANYONE I'D TRUST MORE TO DECIDE THE FATE OF THE WORLD THAN MY FRIENDS.
BUT I DIDN'T FEEL READY, SO I LET DOUBT AND FEAR EAT AT ME. CONTROL ME.
GOD, I WISH I'D NEVER DONE THAT. NEVER GIVEN YOU THOSE POWERS.
'CAUSE THEN I'D SHOW THE LORD OF THE VENGEANCE DEMONS WHAT VENGEANCE REALLY FEELS LIKE.

WISH GRANTED.
WHAT?
ZRRAKT

WH-WHAT DID--
I THINK I KNOW.
WHSKK
AGHH!
TH-THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED. MY NEW POWERS--
ARE GONE, AREN'T THEY? BUFFY MADE A WISH FOR REVENGE--
--AND A VENGEANCE DEMON GRANTED IT.


DOESN'T HURT THAT IT HELPS ME GET MY REVENGE TOO.
YOU MADE ME TO BE A SLAVE. A PUPPET.
I JUST PROVED I'M NOT, DIDN'T I? PROVED I'M MY OWN PERSON.
AND I'M ABOUT TO DO IT AGAIN.
TZZNN
AM I BACK? YOU CAN SEE ME? IT WAS LIKE BEING IN A FANCY RESTAURANT WHERE THEY TRY TO PRETEND I DON'T EXIST.
XANDER!!
BUT YOU KILLED HIM!
NO. I SAID I MADE HIM A GHOST.
INVISIBLE. INTANGIBLE. LIKE I WAS. NOW HE KNOWS HOW IT FEELS.
VENGEANCE ACCOMPLISHED.

YOU FAITHLESS--
GET HIM!
NO!!
I AM STILL LORD OF THE VENGEANCE DEMONS! MY INNATE POWER IS ENOUGH TO ERASE YOU ALL!
VWOOORL

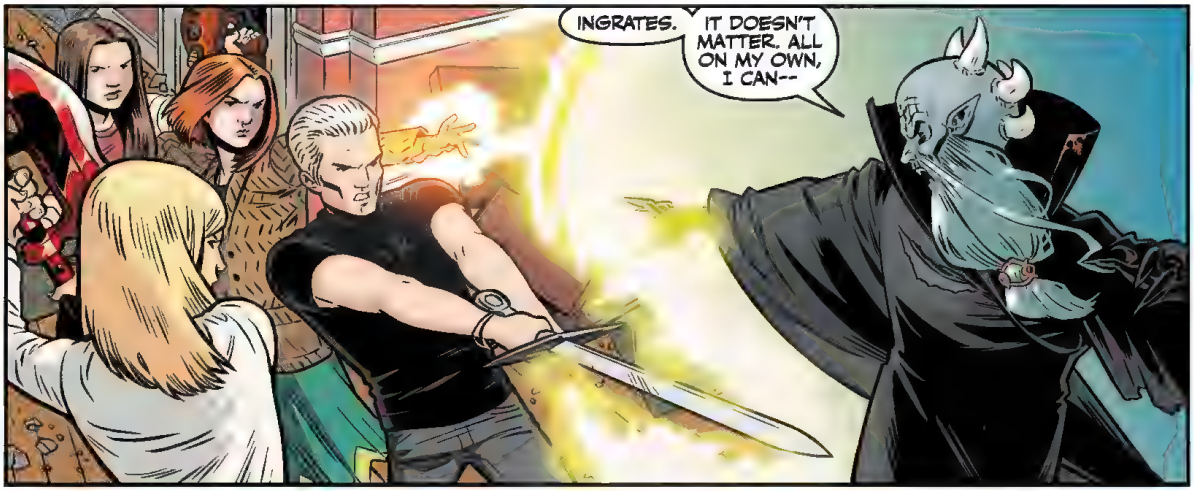
THE REST OF US ARE PRETTY POWERFUL TOO.
FWOOSH
AH. YOU PICKED THAT UP FROM ME.

LET ME SHOW YOU HOW IT'S PROPERLY DONE.
SFFASSHH
NNGAAHHH!

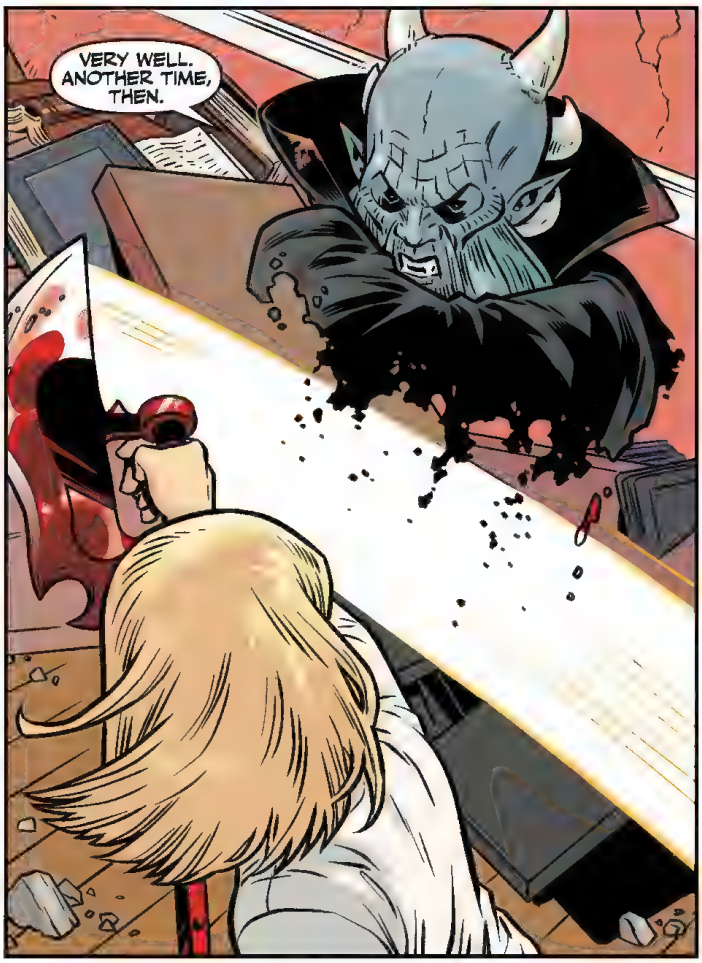
HE--HE JUST--

HIT HIM! HARD AND FAST!
ANYA, HANG ON! GILES, HELP HER! THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING--
I...I WISH THERE WAS. I'M SO SORRY.
IT'S...OKAY. I ONLY EXISTED BECAUSE HE WANTED ME TO. THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY THIS WAS GOING TO END.
HE COULD MAKE ME. HE COULD END ME. BUT IN BETWEEN I DID SOMETHING ONLY I COULD DO.
I MADE MYSELF *REAL*.
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, XANDER HARRIS. BE HAPPY.
I FORGIVE YOU. AND SHE WOULD TOO...

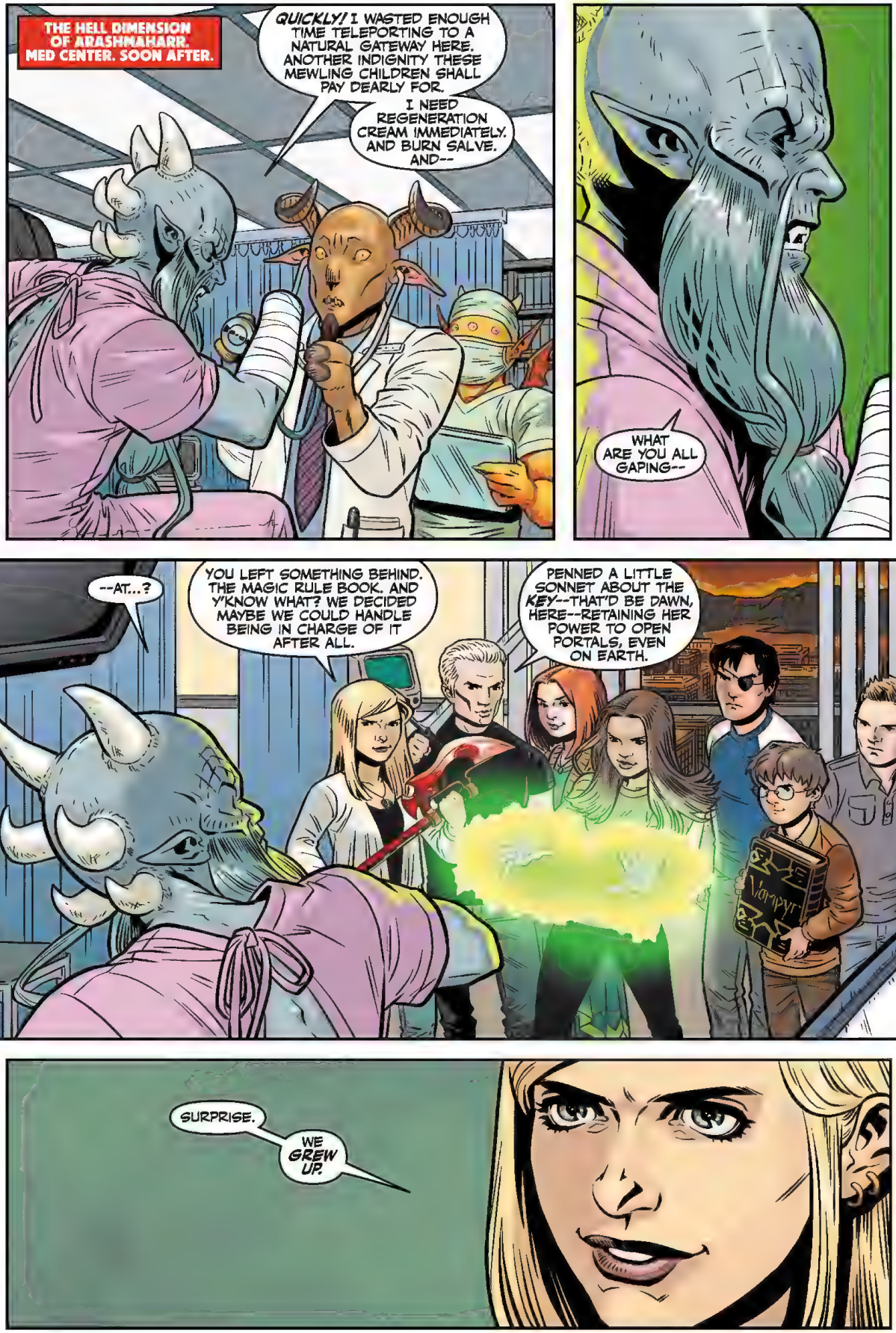
TO ME, MY VENGEANCE DEMONS! TOGETHER WE CAN--
AFTER WHAT YOU JUST DID TO ANYA?
YEAH, RIGHT.
YOU'RE A REALLY BAD BOSS, D'HOFFRYN.
WE QUIT.

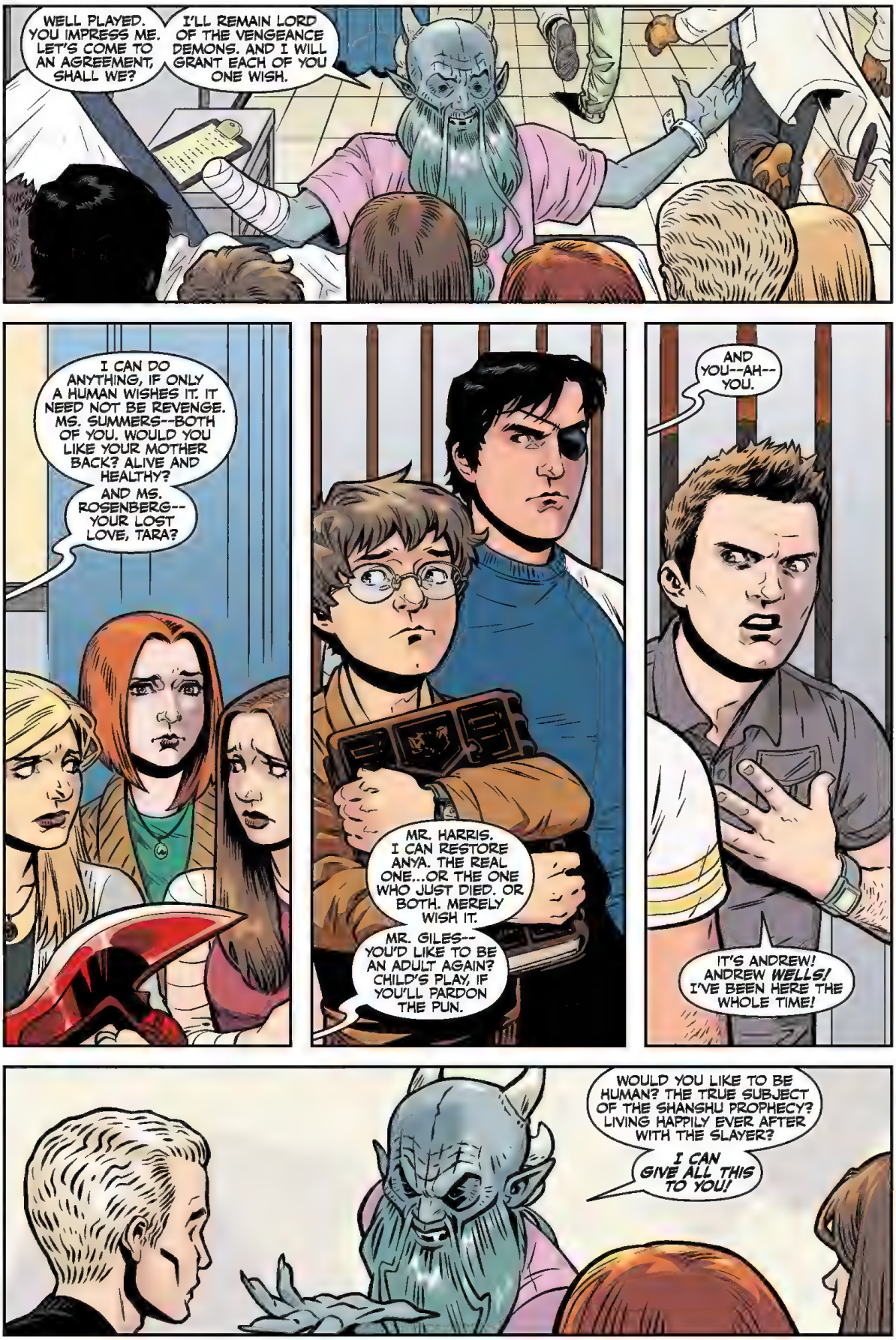

INGRATES.
IT DOESN'T MATTER. ALL ON MY OWN, I CAN--

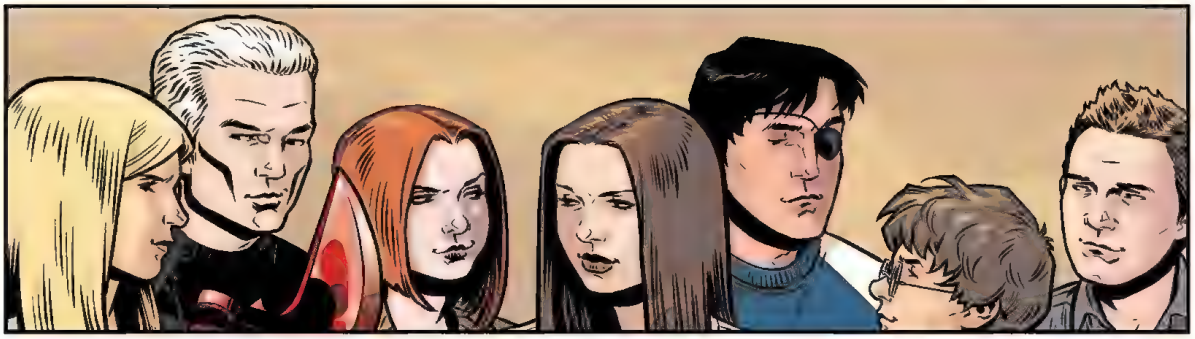
AIGGHH!

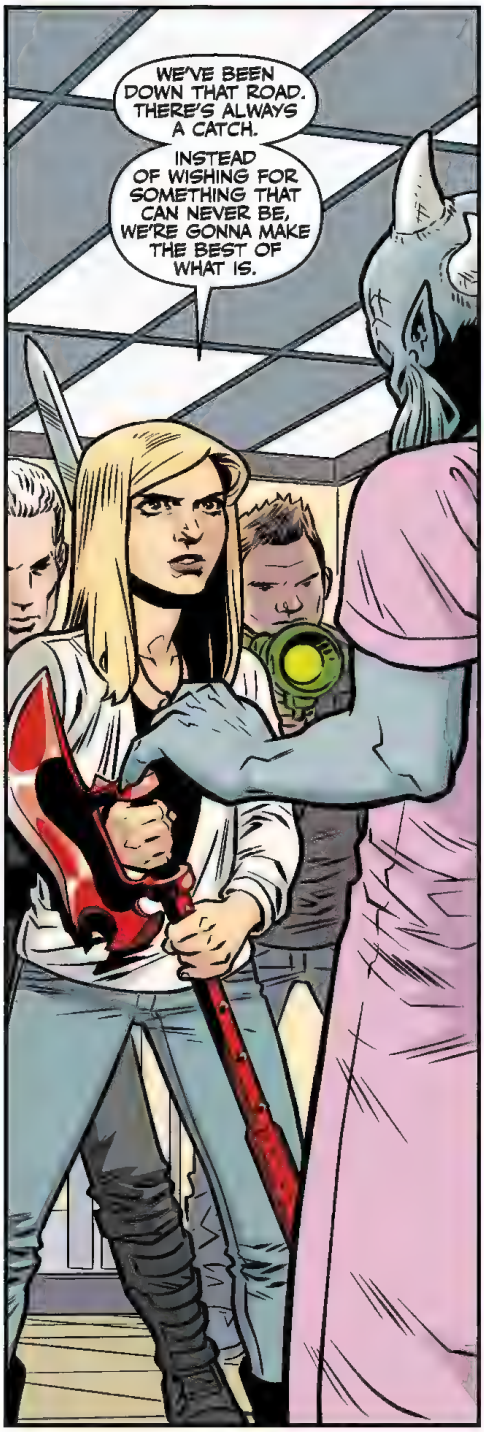

VERY WELL. ANOTHER TIME, THEN.

WE WILL FINISH THIS ON MY TERMS, NOT YOURS.


THE HELL DIMENSION OF ARASHMAHARR. MED CENTER. SOON AFTER.
QUICKLY! I WASTED ENOUGH TIME TELEPORTING TO A NATURAL GATEWAY HERE. ANOTHER INDIGNITY THESE MEWLING CHILDREN SHALL PAY DEARLY FOR.
I NEED REGENERATION CREAM IMMEDIATELY. AND BURN SALVE. AND--
WHAT ARE YOU ALL GAPING--
--AT...?
YOU LEFT SOMETHING BEHIND. THE MAGIC RULE BOOK. AND Y'KNOW WHAT? WE DECIDED MAYBE WE COULD HANDLE BEING IN CHARGE OF IT AFTER ALL.
PENNED A LITTLE SONNET ABOUT THE KEY--THAT'D BE DAWN, HERE--RETAINING HER POWER TO OPEN PORTALS, EVEN ON EARTH.
Vampyr
SURPRISE.
WE GREW UP.

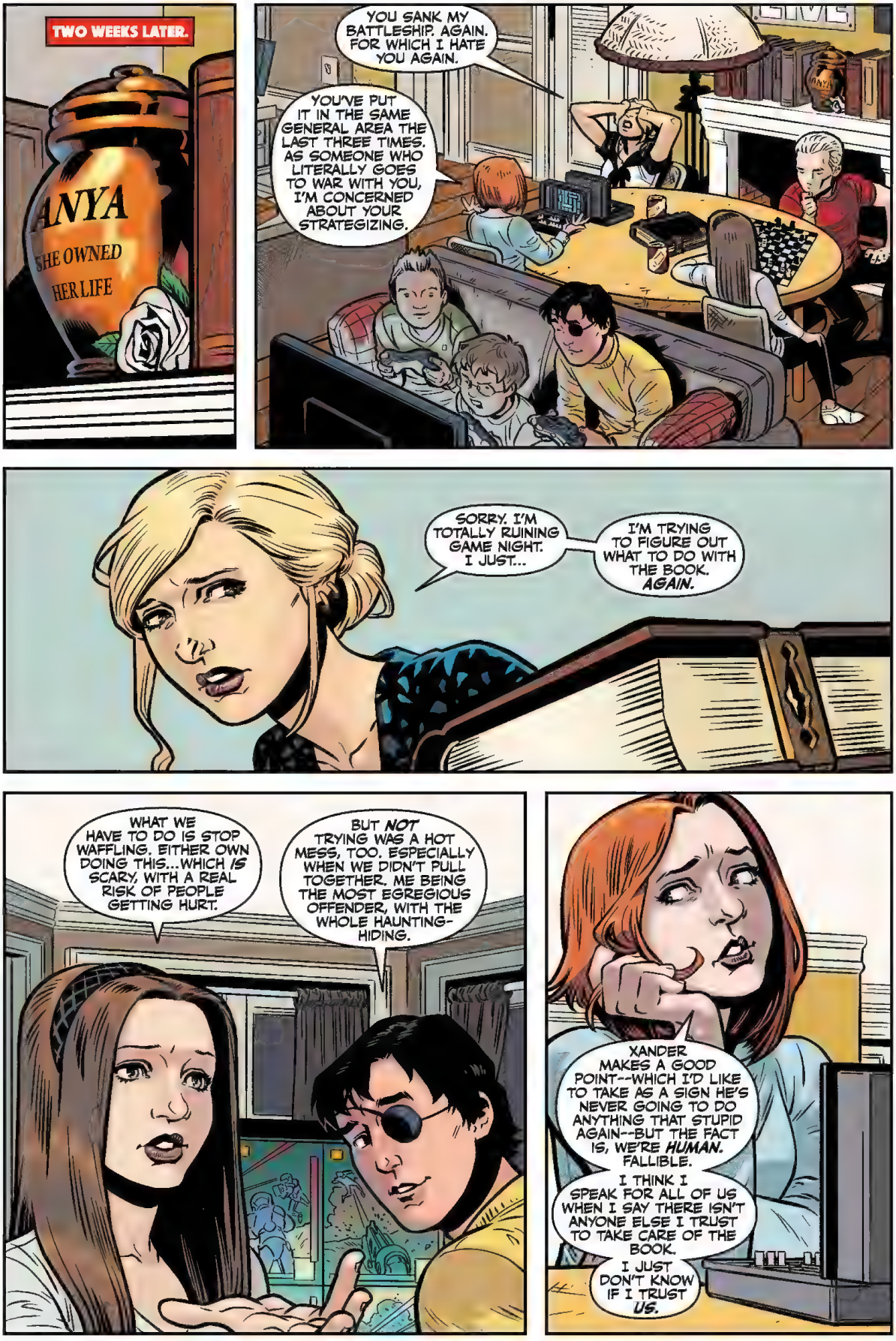

WELL PLAYED. YOU IMPRESS ME. LET'S COME TO AN AGREEMENT, SHALL WE?
I'LL REMAIN LORD OF THE VENGEANCE DEMONS. AND I WILL GRANT EACH OF YOU ONE WISH.
I CAN DO ANYTHING, IF ONLY A HUMAN WISHES IT. IT NEED NOT BE REVENGE. MS. SUMMERS--BOTH OF YOU. WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR MOTHER BACK? ALIVE AND HEALTHY?
AND MS. ROSENBERG--YOUR LOST LOVE, TARA?
MR. HARRIS. I CAN RESTORE ANYA. THE REAL ONE...OR THE ONE WHO JUST DIED. OR BOTH. MERELY WISH IT.
MR. GILES--YOU'D LIKE TO BE AN ADULT AGAIN? CHILD'S PLAY, IF YOU'LL PARDON THE PUN.
AND YOU--AH--YOU.
IT'S ANDREW! ANDREW *WELLS!* I'VE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME!
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE HUMAN? THE TRUE SUBJECT OF THE SHANSHU PROPHECY? LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER WITH THE SLAYER?
I CAN GIVE ALL THIS TO YOU!



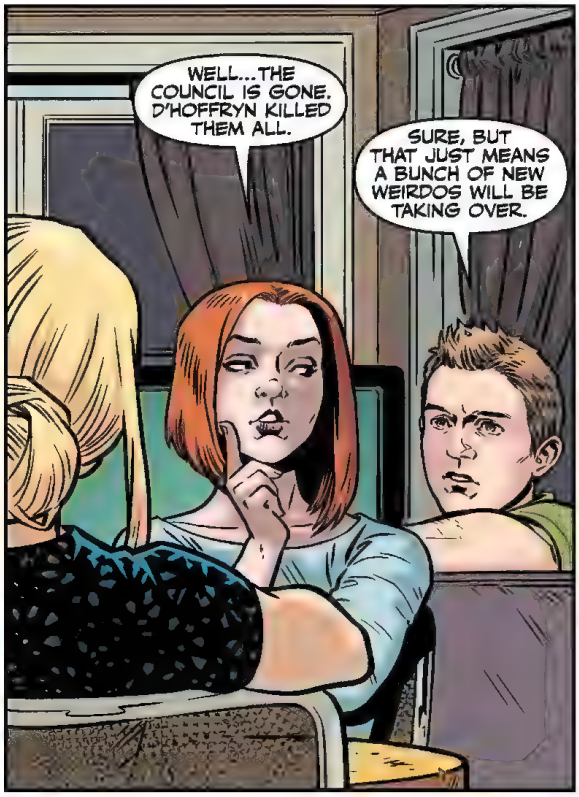

WE'VE BEEN DOWN THAT ROAD. THERE'S ALWAYS A CATCH.
INSTEAD OF WISHING FOR SOMETHING THAT CAN NEVER BE, WE'RE GONNA MAKE THE BEST OF WHAT IS.

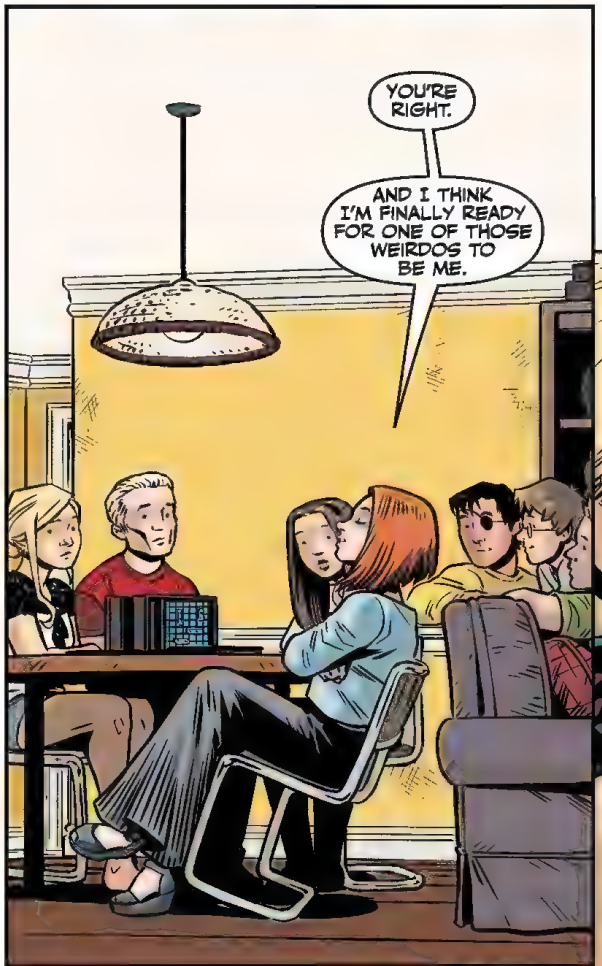
AND SOMETIMES--

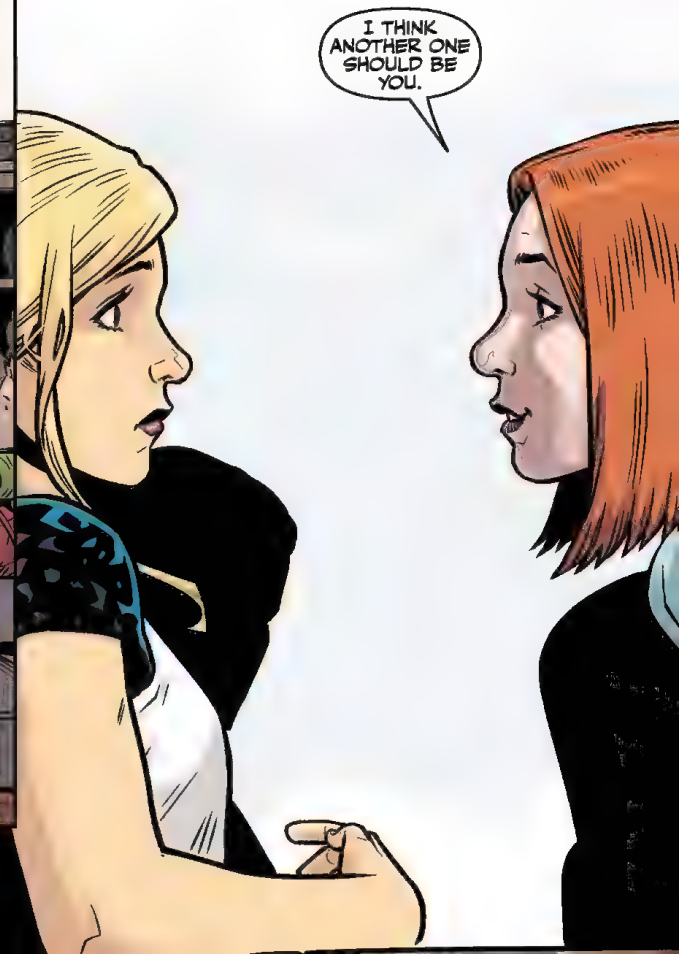
--YOU GET YOUR WISH ANYWAY.
CHOK

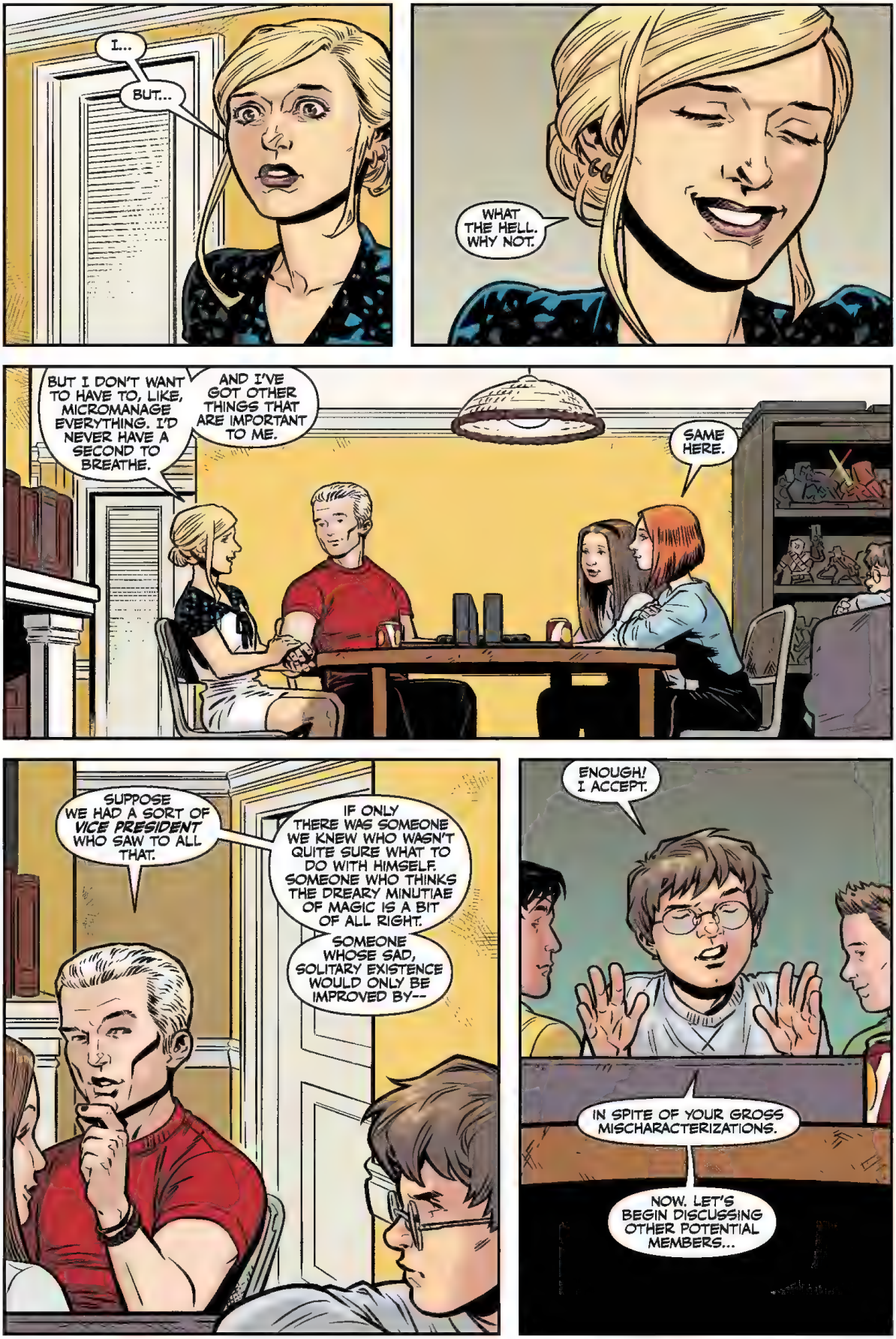

TWO WEEKS LATER.
ANYA
SHE OWNED
HER LIFE
YOU SANK MY BATTLESHIP. AGAIN. FOR WHICH I HATE YOU AGAIN.
YOU'VE PUT IT IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA THE LAST THREE TIMES. AS SOMEONE WHO LITERALLY GOES TO WAR WITH YOU, I'M CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR STRATEGIZING.
SORRY. I'M TOTALLY RUINING GAME NIGHT. I JUST...
I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH THE BOOK. AGAIN.
WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS STOP WAFFLING. EITHER OWN DOING THIS...WHICH IS SCARY, WITH A REAL RISK OF PEOPLE GETTING HURT.
BUT NOT TRYING WAS A HOT MESS, TOO. ESPECIALLY WHEN WE DIDN'T PULL TOGETHER. ME BEING THE MOST EGREGIOUS OFFENDER, WITH THE WHOLE HAUNTING-HIDING.
XANDER MAKES A GOOD POINT--WHICH I'D LIKE TO TAKE AS A SIGN HE'S NEVER GOING TO DO ANYTHING THAT STUPID AGAIN--BUT THE FACT IS, WE'RE HUMAN. FALLIBLE.
I THINK I SPEAK FOR ALL OF US WHEN I SAY THERE ISN'T ANYONE ELSE I TRUST TO TAKE CARE OF THE BOOK.
I JUST DON'T KNOW IF I TRUST US.

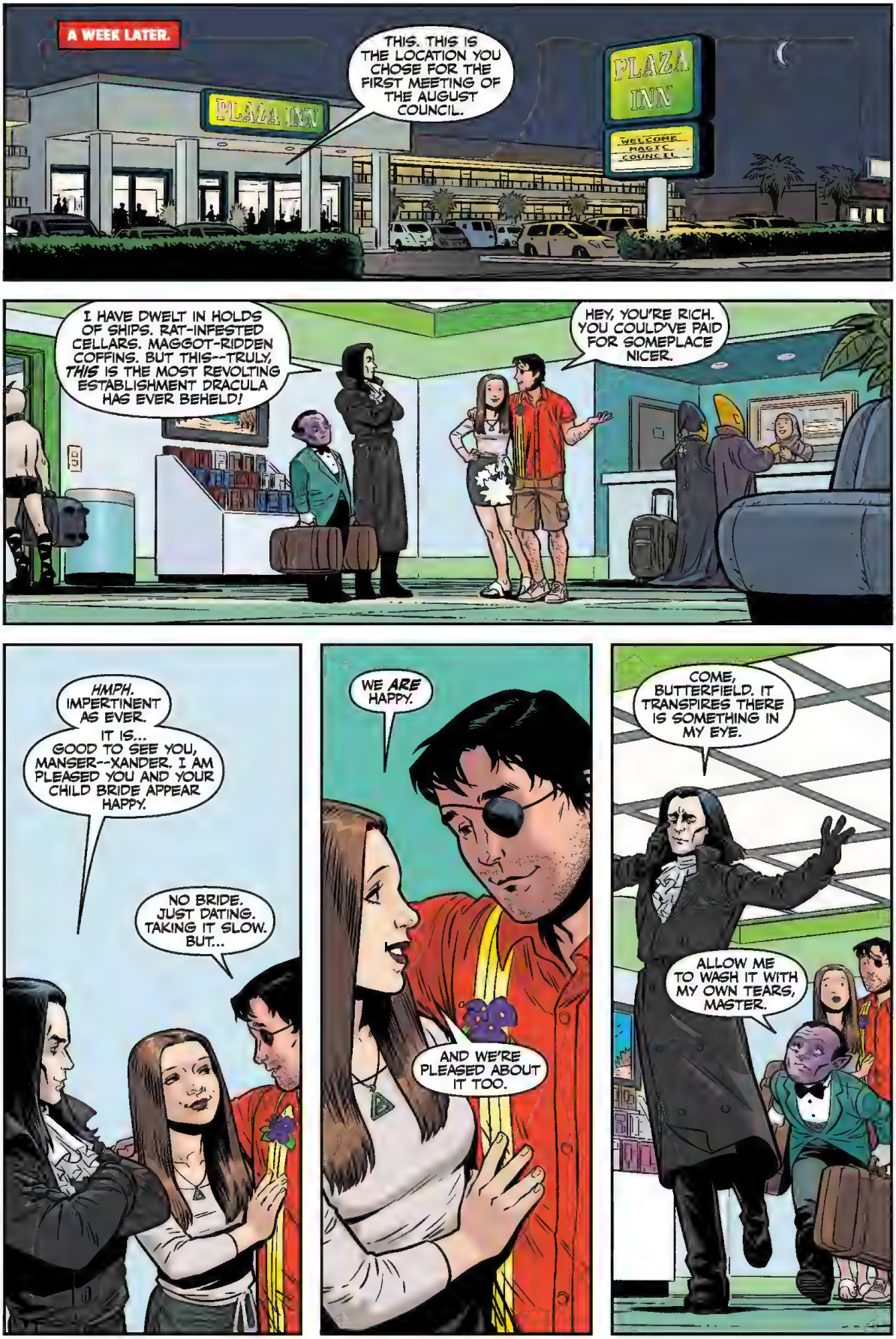
LOOKING BACK, WE NEVER SHOULD'VE TURNED TO THE COUNCIL. THEY WEREN'T EVEN HUMAN, AND THEY WERE MAKING DECISIONS THAT AFFECT ALL HUMANITY.
BUT I LIKED HAVING OTHER OPINIONS, Y'KNOW?


WELL...THE COUNCIL IS GONE. D'HOFFRYN KILLED THEM ALL.
SURE, BUT THAT JUST MEANS A BUNCH OF NEW WEIRDOS WILL BE TAKING OVER.


YOU'RE RIGHT.
AND I THINK I'M FINALLY READY FOR ONE OF THOSE WEIRDOS TO BE ME.


I THINK ANOTHER ONE SHOULD BE YOU.

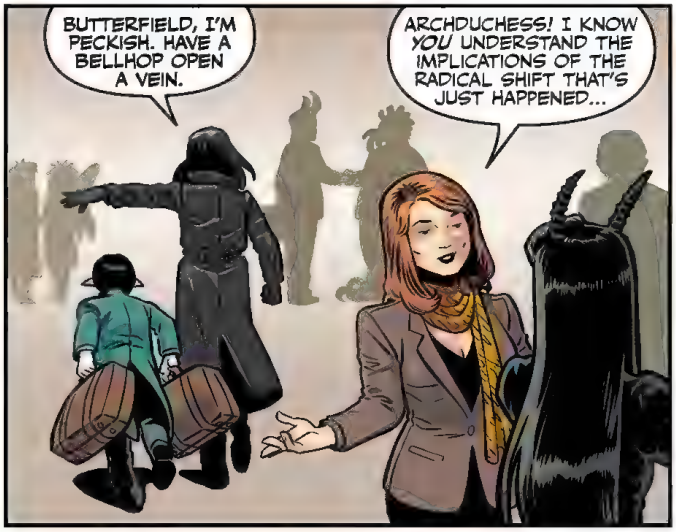

I...
BUT...
WHAT THE HELL. WHY NOT.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO, LIKE, MICROMANAGE EVERYTHING. I'D NEVER HAVE A SECOND TO BREATHE.
AND I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME.
SAME HERE.
SUPPOSE WE HAD A SORT OF *VICE PRESIDENT* WHO SAW TO ALL THAT.
IF ONLY THERE WAS SOMEONE WE KNEW WHO WASN'T QUITE SURE WHAT TO DO WITH HIMSELF. SOMEONE WHO THINKS THE DREARY MINUTIAE OF MAGIC IS A BIT OF ALL RIGHT.
SOMEONE WHOSE SAD, SOLITARY EXISTENCE WOULD ONLY BE IMPROVED BY--
ENOUGH! I ACCEPT.
IN SPITE OF YOUR GROSS MISCHARACTERIZATIONS.
NOW. LET'S BEGIN DISCUSSING OTHER POTENTIAL MEMBERS...

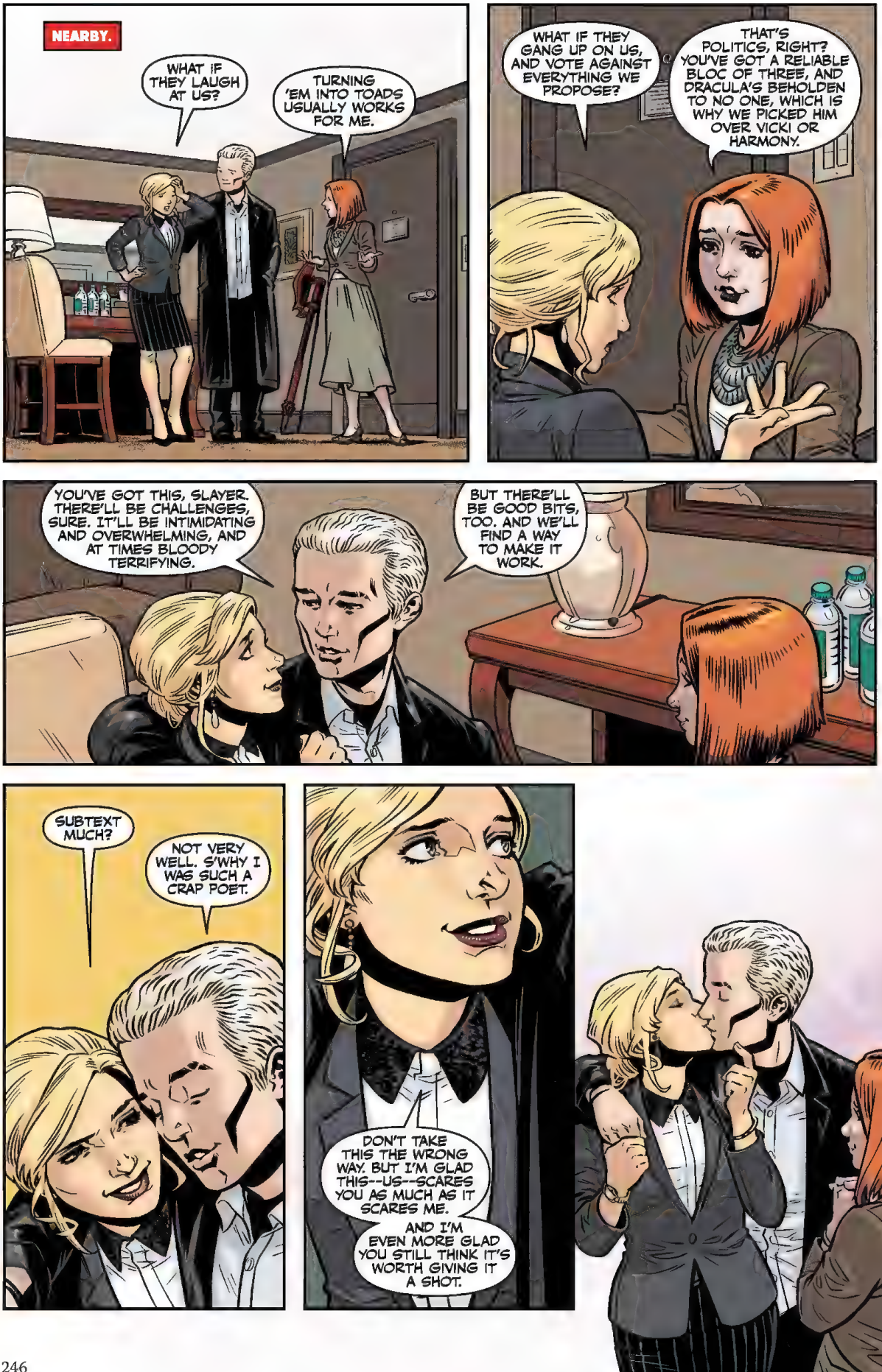

A WEEK LATER.
PLAZA INN
THIS. THIS IS THE LOCATION YOU CHOSE FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AUGUST COUNCIL.
PLAZA INN
WELCOME MAGIC COUNCIL
I HAVE DWELT IN HOLDS OF SHIPS. RAT-INFESTED CELLARS. MAGGOT-RIDDEN COFFINS. BUT THIS--TRULY, THIS IS THE MOST REVOLTING ESTABLISHMENT DRACULA HAS EVER BEHELD!
HEY, YOU'RE RICH. YOU COULD'VE PAID FOR SOMEPLACE NICER.
HMPH. IMPERTINENT AS EVER.
IT IS... GOOD TO SEE YOU, MANSER--XANDER. I AM PLEASED YOU AND YOUR CHILD BRIDE APPEAR HAPPY.
NO BRIDE. JUST DATING. TAKING IT SLOW. BUT...
WE ARE HAPPY.
AND WE'RE PLEASED ABOUT IT TOO.
COME, BUTTERFIELD. IT TRANSPIRES THERE IS SOMETHING IN MY EYE.
ALLOW ME TO WASH IT WITH MY OWN TEARS, MASTER.

ARCHDUCHESS VENOBIA! I'M WITH GHOUL POWER, THE GHOUL RIGHTS ORGANIZATION. A MOMENT TO TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EATING HUMAN FLESH?
FEH. LOBBYISTS. LET US BEGONE FROM HERE, MASTER, ERE--
AH, COUNT DRACULA! LILAH MORGAN, WITH WOLFRAM & HART.
PROTECT
HUMAN
SACRIFI

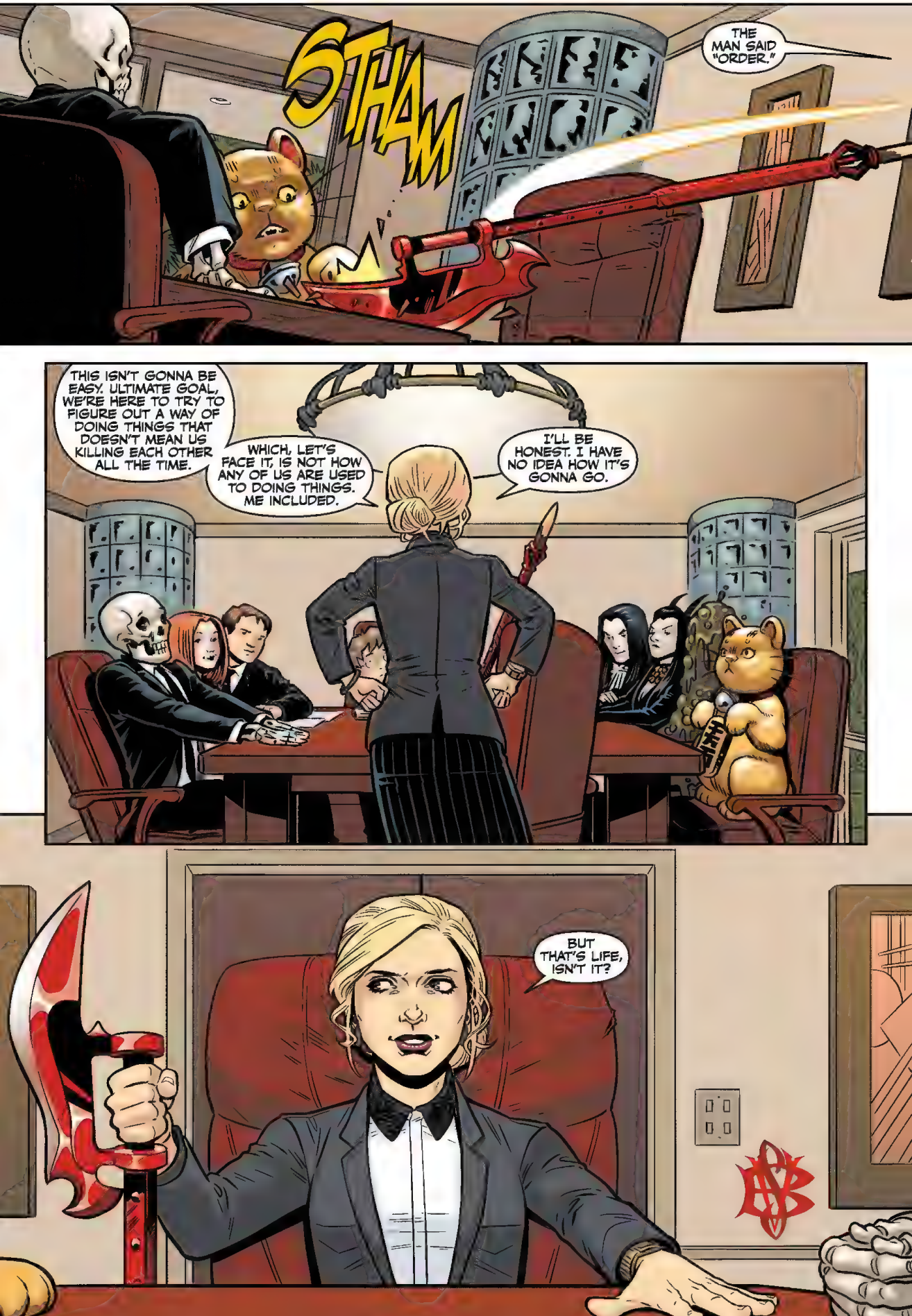
I'D LIKE TO OFFER YOU OUR LOBBYING SERVICES AND LEGAL ADVICE IN YOUR NEW ROLE AS COUNCIL MEMBER.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, WITH A SLAYER-DOMINATED COUNCIL, THE TRADITIONAL BASE OF OUR COMMUNITY MUST WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T GET MARGINALIZED AND--

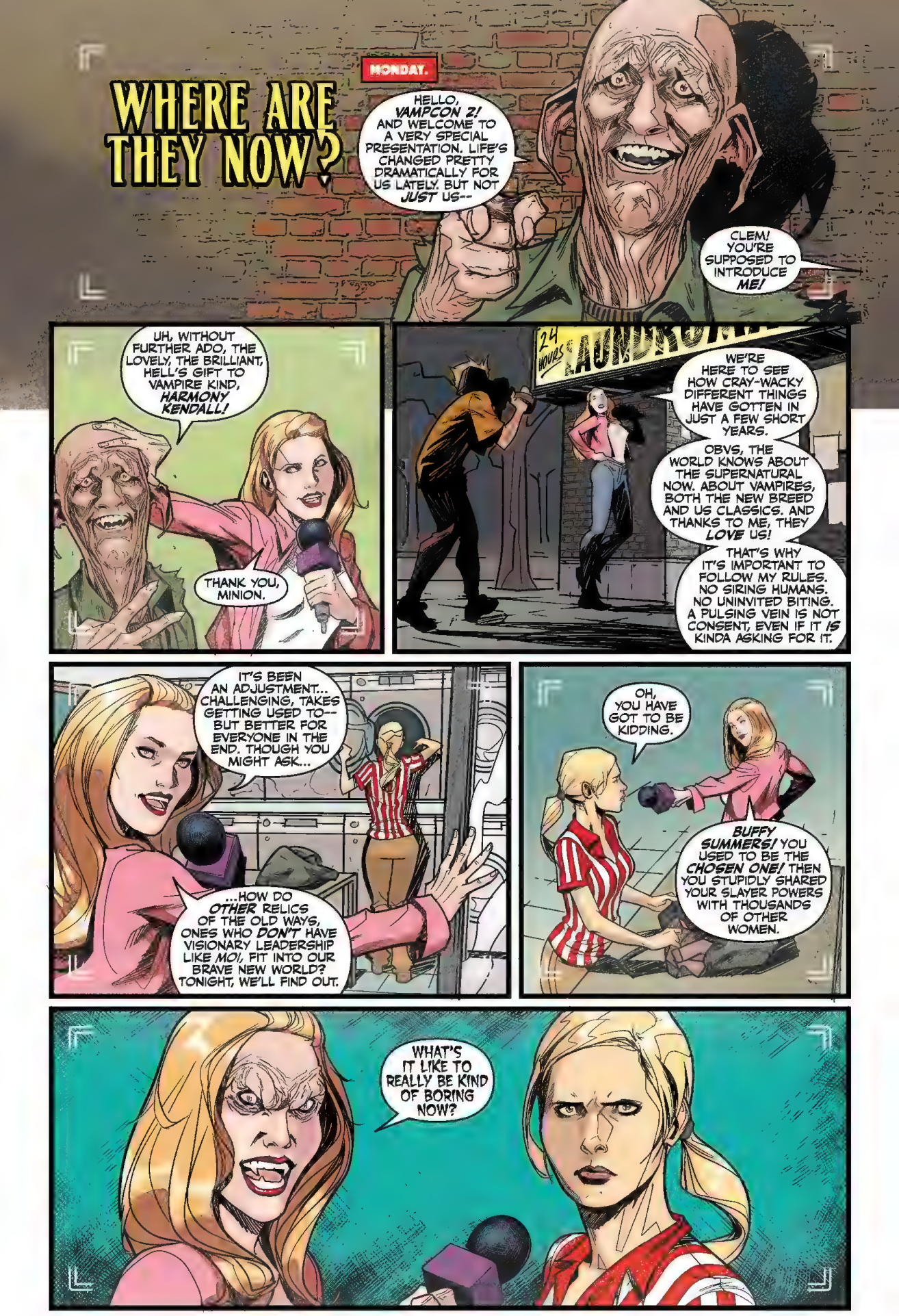
SILENCE. I DO NOT TRUCK WITH LAWYERS UNLESS THEY ARE PRISONERS IN MY CASTLE, THE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR INEVITABLE DOOM SLOWLY DAWNING UPON THEM.
I DO, HOWEVER, ADMIRE YOUR TASTE IN SCARVES.

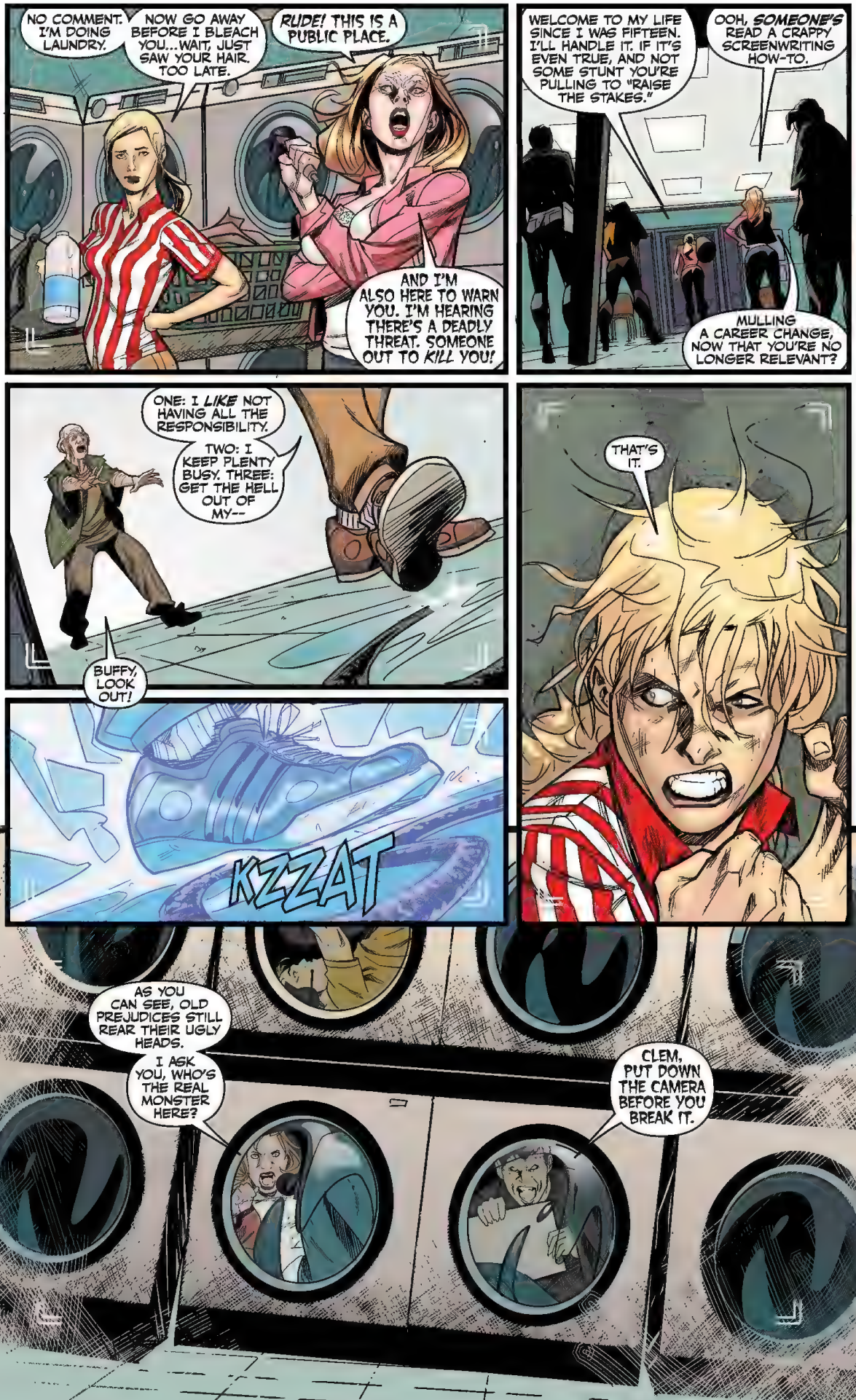

BUTTERFIELD, I'M PECKISH. HAVE A BELLHOP OPEN A VEIN.
ARCHDUCHESS! I KNOW YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RADICAL SHIFT THAT'S JUST HAPPENED...


NEARBY.
WHAT IF THEY LAUGH AT US?
TURNING 'EM INTO TOADS USUALLY WORKS FOR ME.
WHAT IF THEY GANG UP ON US, AND VOTE AGAINST EVERYTHING WE PROPOSE?
THAT'S POLITICS, RIGHT? YOU'VE GOT A RELIABLE BLOC OF THREE, AND DRACULA'S BEHOLDEN TO NO ONE, WHICH IS WHY WE PICKED HIM OVER VICKI OR HARMONY.
YOU'VE GOT THIS, SLAYER. THERE'LL BE CHALLENGES, SURE. IT'LL BE INTIMIDATING AND OVERWHELMING, AND AT TIMES BLOODY TERRIFYING.
BUT THERE'LL BE GOOD BITS, TOO. AND WE'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK.
SUBTEXT MUCH?
NOT VERY WELL. S'WHY I WAS SUCH A CRAP POET.
DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY. BUT I'M GLAD THIS--US--SCARES YOU AS MUCH AS IT SCARES ME.
AND I'M EVEN MORE GLAD YOU STILL THINK IT'S WORTH GIVING IT A SHOT.

THE SEASHELL ROOM.
THE SLAYER HAS STACKED THE COUNCIL WITH HER ALLIES!
THIS DISPLEASES ME AS WELL, ALTHOUGH THE REST OF US YET OUTNUMBER THEM.
BUT THIS "RILEY FINN" FLESHSACK--A REPRESENTATIVE OF HUMAN MILITARY FORCES? OUTRAGEOUS!
IT'S ABOUT TIME NORMAL PEOPLE HAD A SEAT AT THIS TABLE, PAL.
ENOUGH. CONCERNS MAY BE AIRED IN THE PROPER CONTEXT. THE MEETING WILL COME TO ORDER.
BAM
"NORMAL"? THEN WHAT, DARE I ASK, ARE THE REST OF US? YOUR BIGOTRY IS INTOLERABLE, SIR!
I'M NOT HERE ADVOCATING FOR SKINNING YOUR CONSTITUENTS!
BAM BAM BAM
ORDER! ORDER!

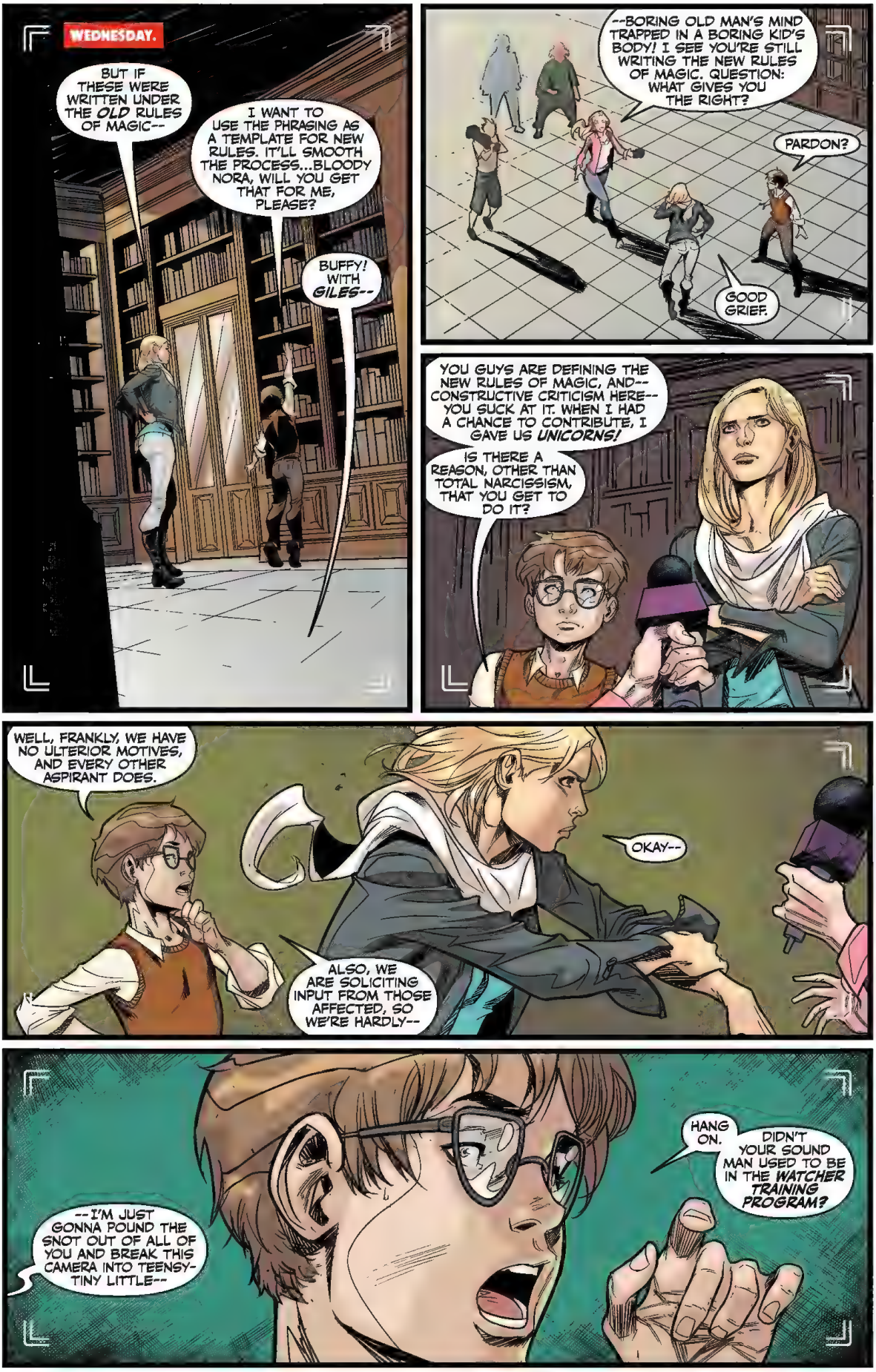

THAM
THE MAN SAID "ORDER."
THIS ISN'T GONNA BE EASY. ULTIMATE GOAL, WE'RE HERE TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT A WAY OF DOING THINGS THAT DOESN'T MEAN US KILLING EACH OTHER ALL THE TIME.
WHICH, LET'S FACE IT, IS NOT HOW ANY OF US ARE USED TO DOING THINGS. ME INCLUDED.
I'LL BE HONEST. I HAVE NO IDEA HOW IT'S GONNA GO.
BUT THAT'S LIFE, ISN'T IT?


WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
MONDAY.
HELLO, VAMPCON 2! AND WELCOME TO A VERY SPECIAL PRESENTATION. LIFE'S CHANGED PRETTY DRAMATICALLY FOR US LATELY. BUT NOT JUST US--
CLEM! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO INTRODUCE ME!
UH, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, THE LOVELY, THE BRILLIANT, HELL'S GIFT TO VAMPIRE KIND, HARMONY KENDALL!
THANK YOU, MINION.
24 HOURS
WE'RE HERE TO SEE HOW CRAY-WACKY DIFFERENT THINGS HAVE GOTTEN IN JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS.
OBVS, THE WORLD KNOWS ABOUT THE SUPERNATURAL NOW. ABOUT VAMPIRES, BOTH THE NEW BREED AND US CLASSICS. AND THANKS TO ME, THEY LOVE US!
THAT'S WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW MY RULES. NO SIRING HUMANS. NO UNINVITED BITING. A PULSING VEIN IS NOT CONSENT, EVEN IF IT IS KINDA ASKING FOR IT.
IT'S BEEN AN ADJUSTMENT... CHALLENGING, TAKES GETTING USED TO-- BUT BETTER FOR EVERYONE IN THE END. THOUGH YOU MIGHT ASK...
...HOW DO OTHER RELICS OF THE OLD WAYS, ONES WHO DON'T HAVE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP LIKE MOI, FIT INTO OUR BRAVE NEW WORLD? TONIGHT, WE'LL FIND OUT.
OH, YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING.
BUFFY SUMMERS! YOU USED TO BE THE CHOSEN ONE! THEN YOU STUPIDLY SHARED YOUR SLAYER POWERS WITH THOUSANDS OF OTHER WOMEN.
WHAT'S IT LIKE TO REALLY BE KIND OF BORING NOW?

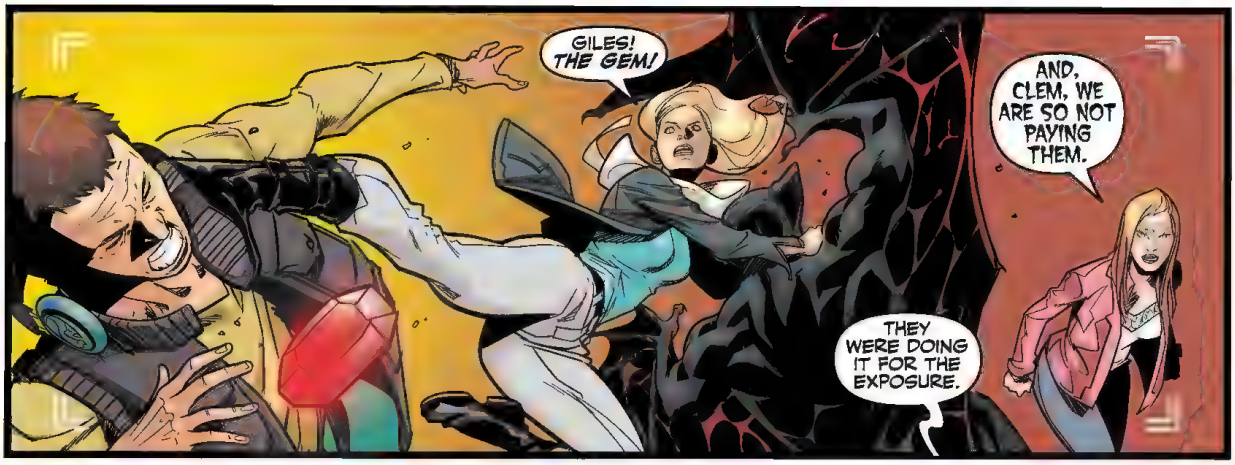

NO COMMENT. I'M DOING LAUNDRY.
NOW GO AWAY BEFORE I BLEACH YOU...WAIT, JUST SAW YOUR HAIR. TOO LATE.
RUDE! THIS IS A PUBLIC PLACE.
AND I'M ALSO HERE TO WARN YOU. I'M HEARING THERE'S A DEADLY THREAT. SOMEONE OUT TO *KILL* YOU!
WELCOME TO MY LIFE SINCE I WAS FIFTEEN. I'LL HANDLE IT. IF IT'S EVEN TRUE, AND NOT SOME STUNT YOU'RE PULLING TO "RAISE THE STAKES."
OOH, *SOMEONE'S* READ A CRAPPY SCREENWRITING HOW-TO.
MULLING A CAREER CHANGE, NOW THAT YOU'RE NO LONGER RELEVANT?
ONE: I *LIKE* NOT HAVING ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY.
TWO: I KEEP PLENTY BUSY. THREE: GET THE HELL OUT OF MY--
BUFFY, LOOK OUT!
KZZAT
THAT'S IT.
AS YOU CAN SEE, OLD PREJUDICES STILL REAR THEIR UGLY HEADS.
I ASK YOU, WHO'S THE REAL MONSTER HERE?
CLEM, PUT DOWN THE CAMERA BEFORE YOU BREAK IT.

TUESDAY.
BUFFY!
YOU'RE THE SLAYER WHO BREAKS ALL THE RULES. SHARING POWER, GETTING OLD...I MEAN, LIKE, REALLY OLD--
SERIOUSLY? AGAIN?
WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?
--AND DATING VAMPIRES--SPEAKING OF AGAIN.
MY EX, THIS TIME, BUT NO TAYLOR/KANYE HERE. I BOOTED HIS TRIFLING BUTT AGES AGO.
SO. WHAT MAKES YOU SO SPECIAL THAT YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO CHANGE THE WAY THINGS HAVE WORKED FOR MILLENNIALS?
"MILLENNIA." AND GO AWAY--
STREETCAR!
SKRRNCH

THANKS! OUR BRAKES JUST WENT!
I TOLD BUFFY SOMEONE'S TRYING TO KILL HER!
RIGHT. FUNNY HOW IT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE THERE TO FILM IT.
OH! MY! GOD! I WAS STANDING THERE TOO! HOW DARE YOU INSANGUINATE--
"INSINUATE." SPIKE, LET'S JUST GO. DATE NIGHT'S KINDA RUINED.
"DATE NIGHT"? ALREADY SCHEDULING THESE THINGS, ARE WE? TROUBLE IN PARADISE? PASSION FADING WITH YOUR YOUTHFUL LOOKS?
CAN'T SAY I BLAME YOU. BLONDIE BEAR'S REALLY LOST HIS EDGE SINCE YOU LEASHED HIM. BO-RING!
THIS IS HOW A BLOKE'S MEANT TO ACT WHEN HE'S IN A RELATIONSHIP, I'LL HAVE YOU--
VAMP
SPIKE. BETTER THIS WAY.
KRIK
CLEM! RECORD THIS SO WE CAN SUE THEM!
YOU GUYS SAID NOT TO TOUCH THE CAMERA.
JUST DO IT!

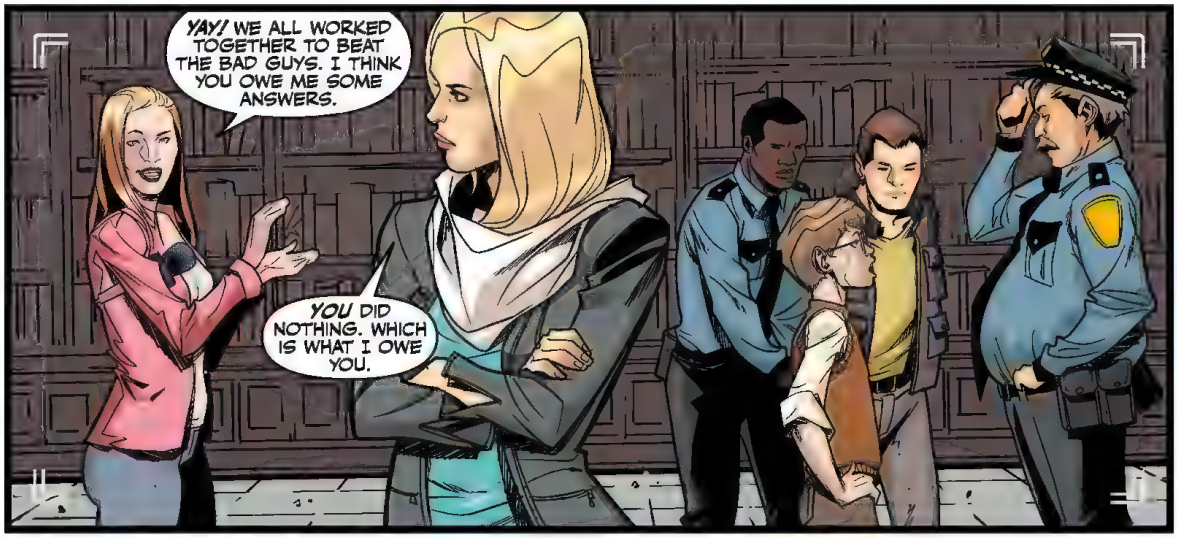

WEDNESDAY.
BUT IF THESE WERE WRITTEN UNDER THE OLD RULES OF MAGIC--
I WANT TO USE THE PHRASING AS A TEMPLATE FOR NEW RULES. IT'LL SMOOTH THE PROCESS...BLOODY NORA, WILL YOU GET THAT FOR ME, PLEASE?
BUFFY! WITH GILES--
--BORING OLD MAN'S MIND TRAPPED IN A BORING KID'S BODY! I SEE YOU'RE STILL WRITING THE NEW RULES OF MAGIC. QUESTION: WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT?
PARDON?
GOOD GRIEF.
YOU GUYS ARE DEFINING THE NEW RULES OF MAGIC, AND-- CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM HERE-- YOU SUCK AT IT. WHEN I HAD A CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE, I GAVE US UNICORNS!
IS THERE A REASON, OTHER THAN TOTAL NARCISSISM, THAT YOU GET TO DO IT?
WELL, FRANKLY, WE HAVE NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES, AND EVERY OTHER ASPIRANT DOES.
OKAY--
ALSO, WE ARE SOLICITING INPUT FROM THOSE AFFECTED, SO WE'RE HARDLY--
--I'M JUST GONNA POUND THE SNOT OUT OF ALL OF YOU AND BREAK THIS CAMERA INTO TEENSY-TINY LITTLE--
HANG ON.
DIDN'T YOUR SOUND MAN USED TO BE IN THE WATCHER TRAINING PROGRAM?

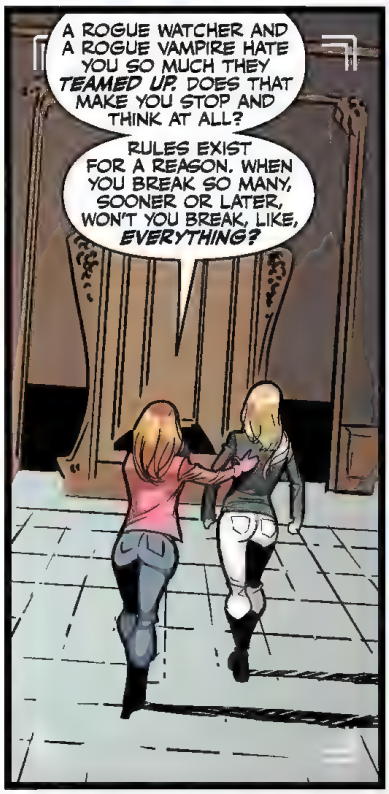
A WATCHER AND A VAMPIRE, HUH?
I'M STARTING TO GET AN IDEA WHO'S BEHIND ALL THESE ATTEMPTS TO KILL ME!
FINE. I'M GLAD IT'S OUT IN THE OPEN. YOU'RE A THREAT TO EVERYONE, TAMPERING WITH PRIMORDIAL FORCES LIKE THEY'RE INSTAGRAM FILTERS!
YOU AND YOUR IDIOT FRIENDS HAVE RUINED EVERYTHING. NOW YOU'LL PAY WITH YOUR LIVES!
W.T.F.? I HIRED YOU TO SHOOT A DOCUMENTARY! AND YOU COULD'VE KILLED ME, TOO! WORST MINIONS EVER!
CLEM, GET THIS ON TAPE. I AM GIVING THESE GUYS THE WORST REVIEW ON YELP.

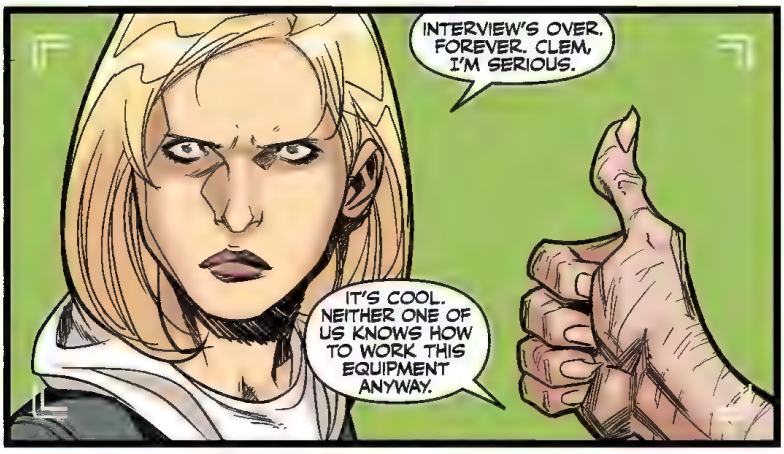

GILES! THE GEM!
AND, CLEM, WE ARE SO NOT PAYING THEM.
THEY WERE DOING IT FOR THE EXPOSURE.

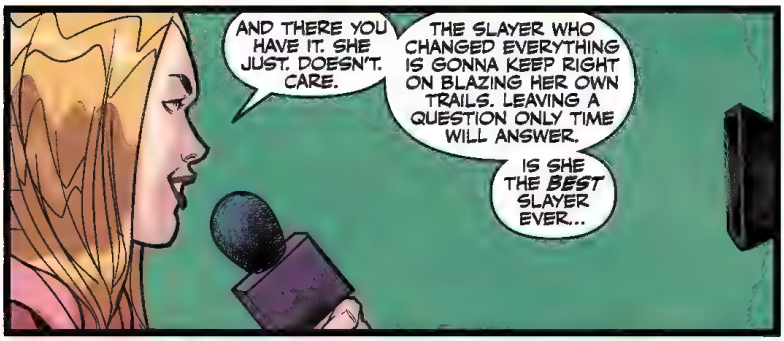
THANK YOU. AND HERE'S A BOOK--WHICH, OF COURSE, IS MADE OF WOOD PULP--

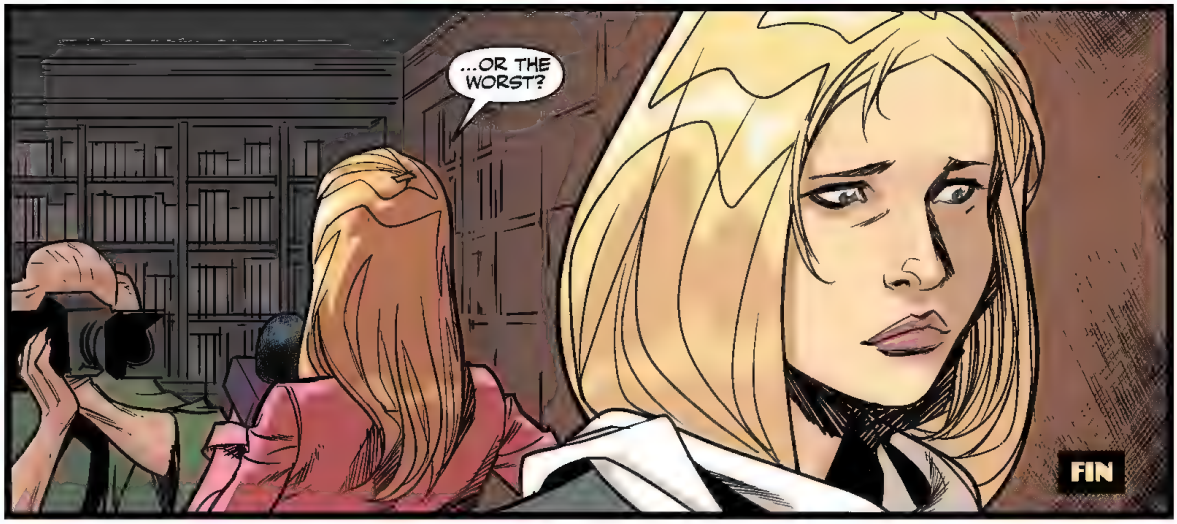
I ALWAYS SAID KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.
YOU NEVER SAID THAT. GETTING YOU TO READ ANYTHING WAS EXCRUCIATING--
SHH! DON'T RUIN IT.
PAFT


YAY! WE ALL WORKED TOGETHER TO BEAT THE BAD GUYS. I THINK YOU OWE ME SOME ANSWERS.
YOU DID NOTHING. WHICH IS WHAT I OWE YOU.

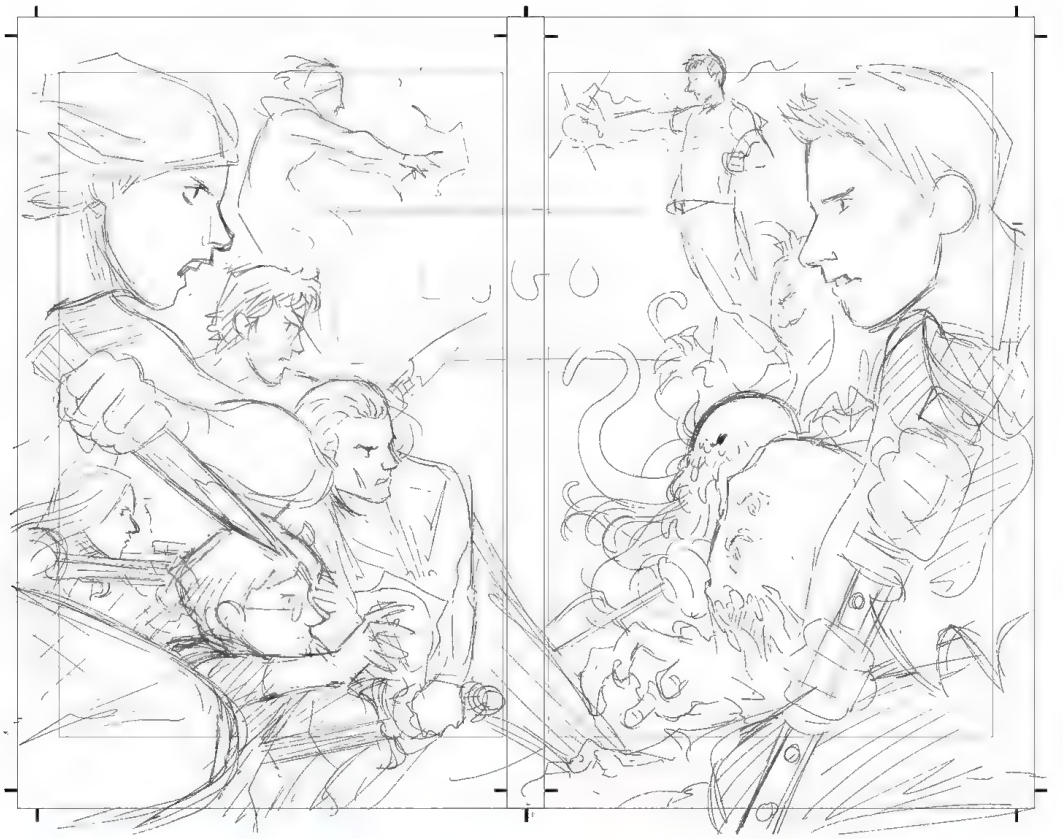

A ROGUE WATCHER AND A ROGUE VAMPIRE HATE YOU SO MUCH THEY TEAMED UP. DOES THAT MAKE YOU STOP AND THINK AT ALL?
RULES EXIST FOR A REASON. WHEN YOU BREAK SO MANY, SOONER OR LATER, WON'T YOU BREAK, LIKE, EVERYTHING?


INTERVIEW'S OVER. FOREVER. CLEM, I'M SERIOUS.
IT'S COOL. NEITHER ONE OF US KNOWS HOW TO WORK THIS EQUIPMENT ANYWAY.


AND THERE YOU HAVE IT. SHE JUST. DOESN'T. CARE.
THE SLAYER WHO CHANGED EVERYTHING IS GONNA KEEP RIGHT ON BLAZING HER OWN TRAILS. LEAVING A QUESTION ONLY TIME WILL ANSWER.
IS SHE THE BEST SLAYER EVER...


...OR THE WORST?
FIN

Cover pencils for the issue #23 portion of the variant cover.

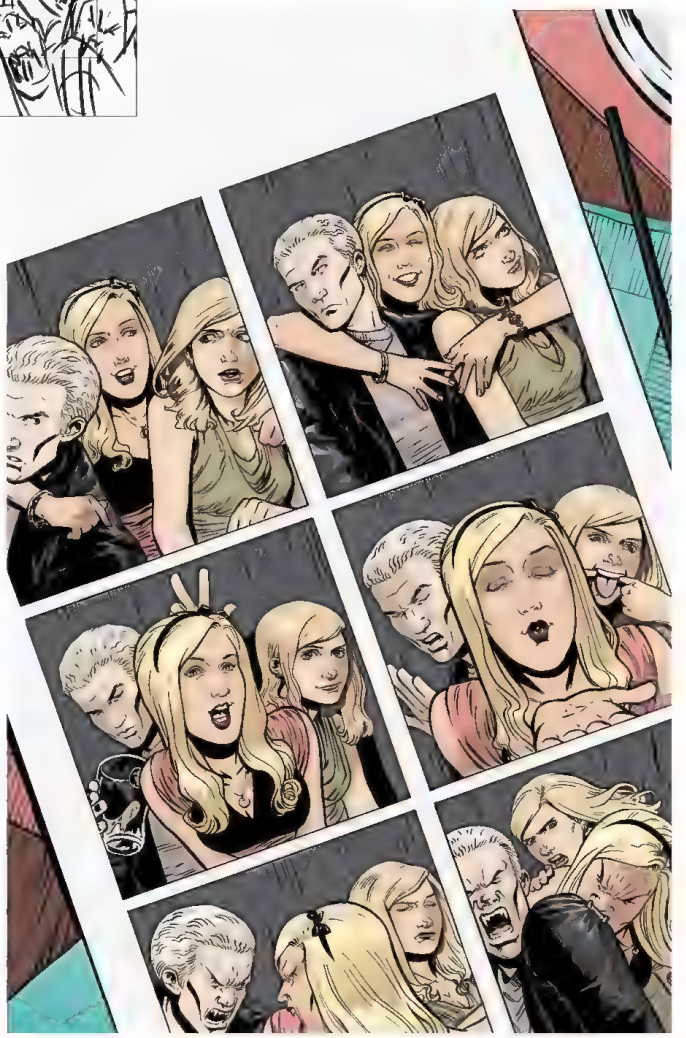


Cover sketch for the issue #23 and #24 variant covers.

Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #23 and #24, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson. Heroes and villains!

Cover sketch for the issue #21 variant cover, an amazing idea full of so much hilarity from Rebekah. The expressions on all the characters that were captured in this sketch—with such small strokes—are amazing!

To the right:
Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #21, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.



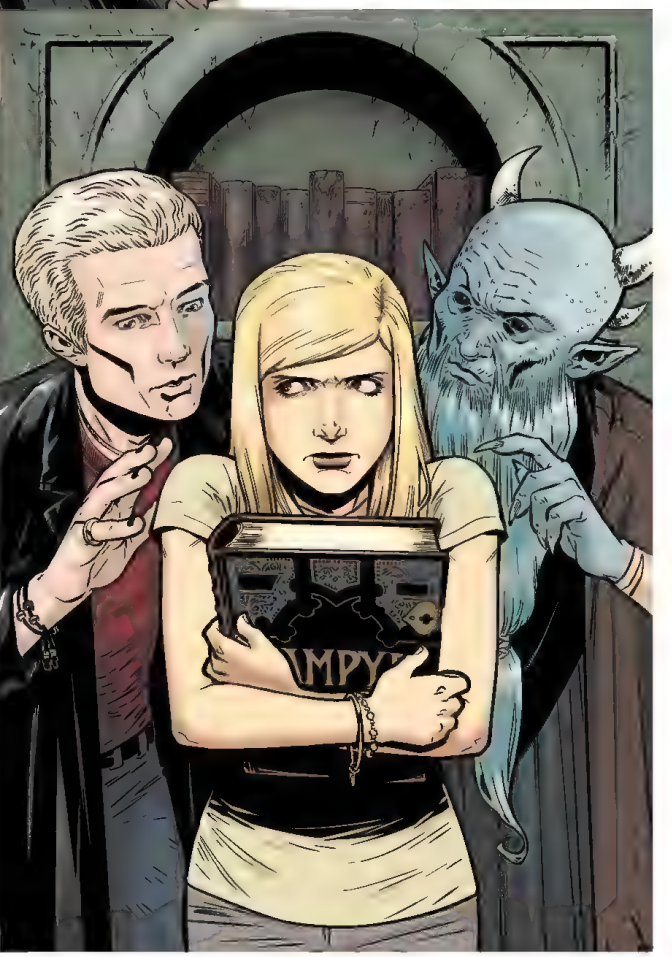
Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #22, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.

Above and right:
Rebekah's sketch for the issue #22 variant. Also, one of the other sketch options for this cover, representing the argument between Buffy and Willow as an all-out battle.

Rebekah's design for Lake Stevens, a new character—and a new love-interest for Willow!—from the Department of Defense's Unified Supernatural Combatant Command.

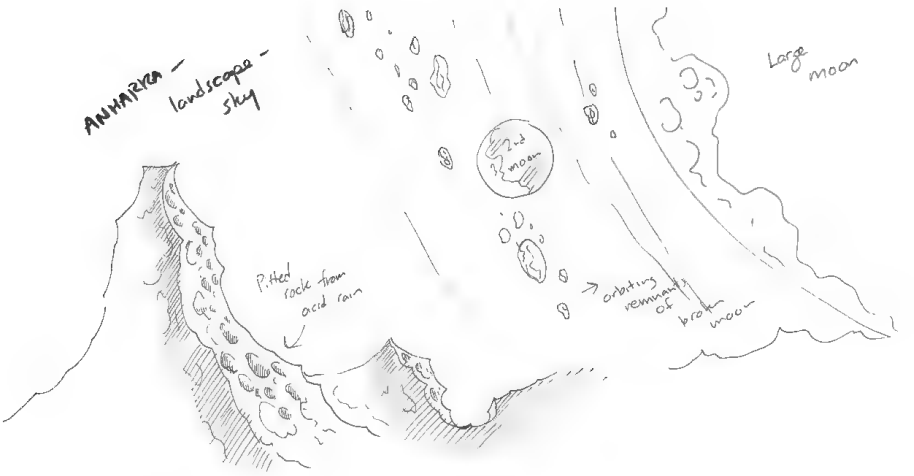
Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #25, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.

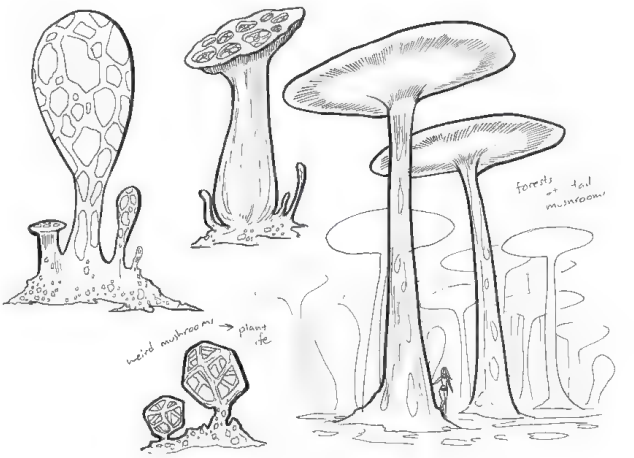
To the right:
Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #26, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.



Designs from artist Megan Levens for the various new members of D'Hoffryn's Magic Council: Keiko, the Quiet Man, Mushroom Man, and Monarch.

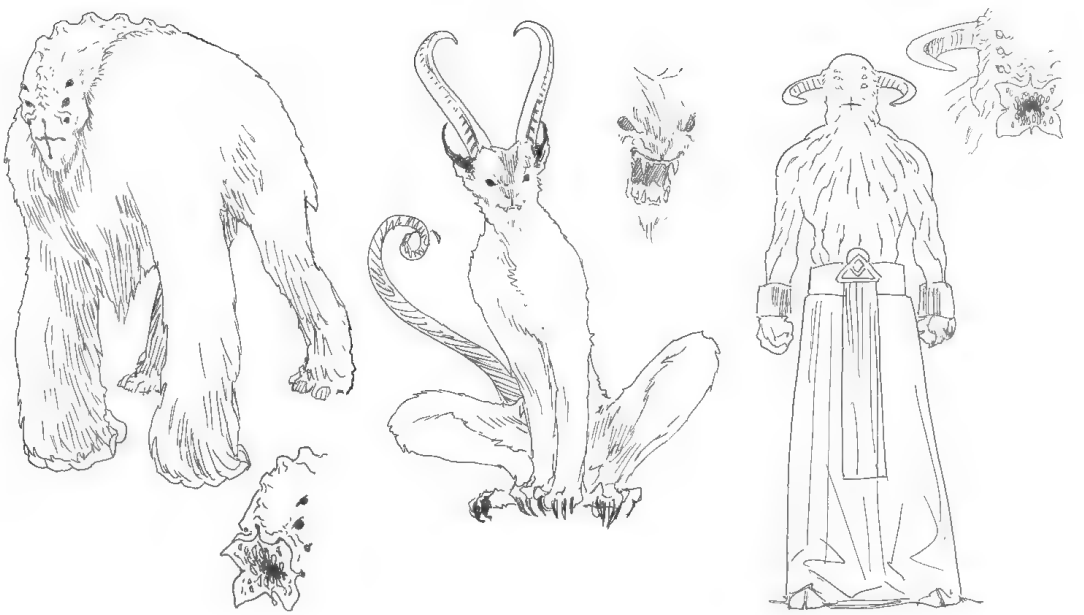
To the left:
Young Giles's crush, the fairy Sundrop.



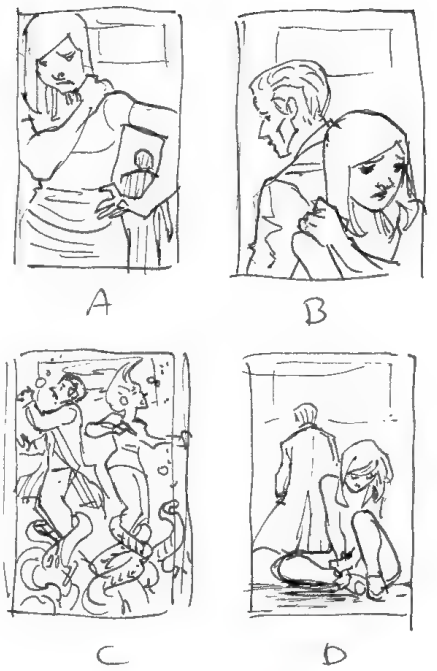


For the dimension of Anharra, where Dawn and Xander would find themselves trapped at the end of issue #25, Megan and Rebekah were able to coordinate their efforts for the design of Anharra and the Anharrans—as they were drawing them at the same time.

Shown here are Megan Levens's initial designs for the Anharran landscape and Rebekah's designs for the Anharrans.

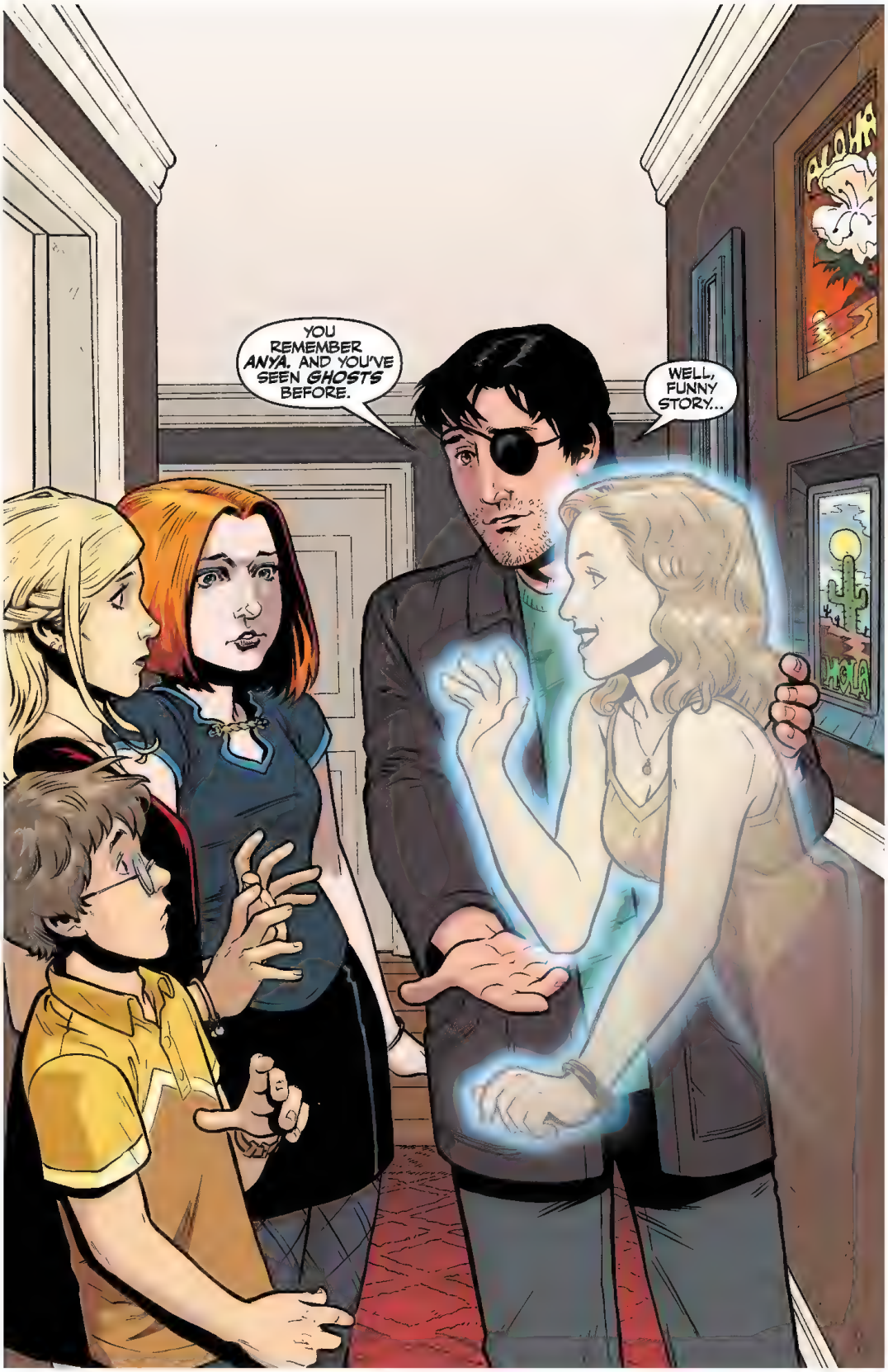


Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #27, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.



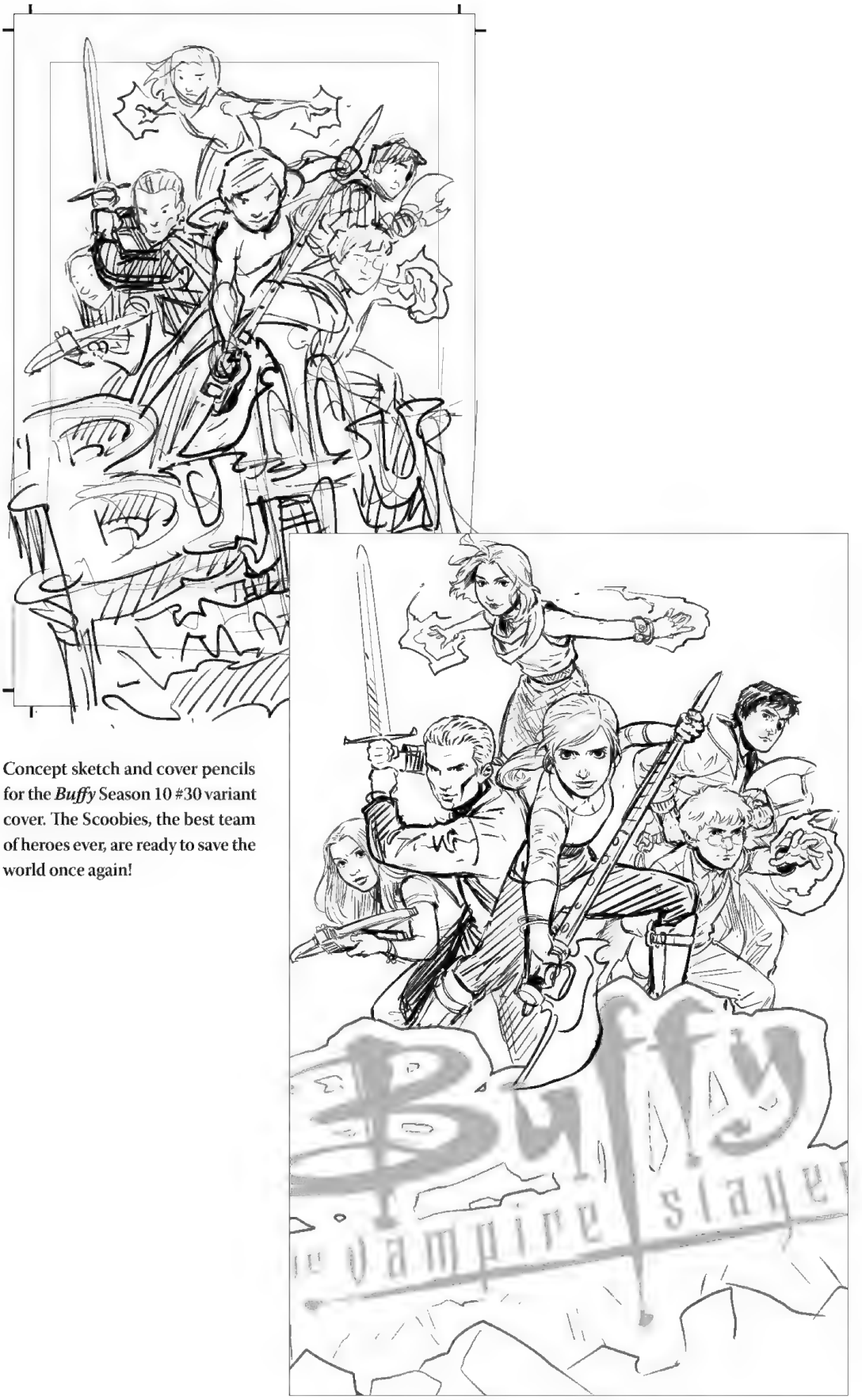
Thumbnail concepts and cover pencils for the *Buffy* Season 10 #28 variant cover. In her thumbnail sketches, Rebekah was able to explore different options for a cover symbolizing Buffy and Spike breaking up—option D was the winner for us, but it was a tough choice!

To the right:
Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #28, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.

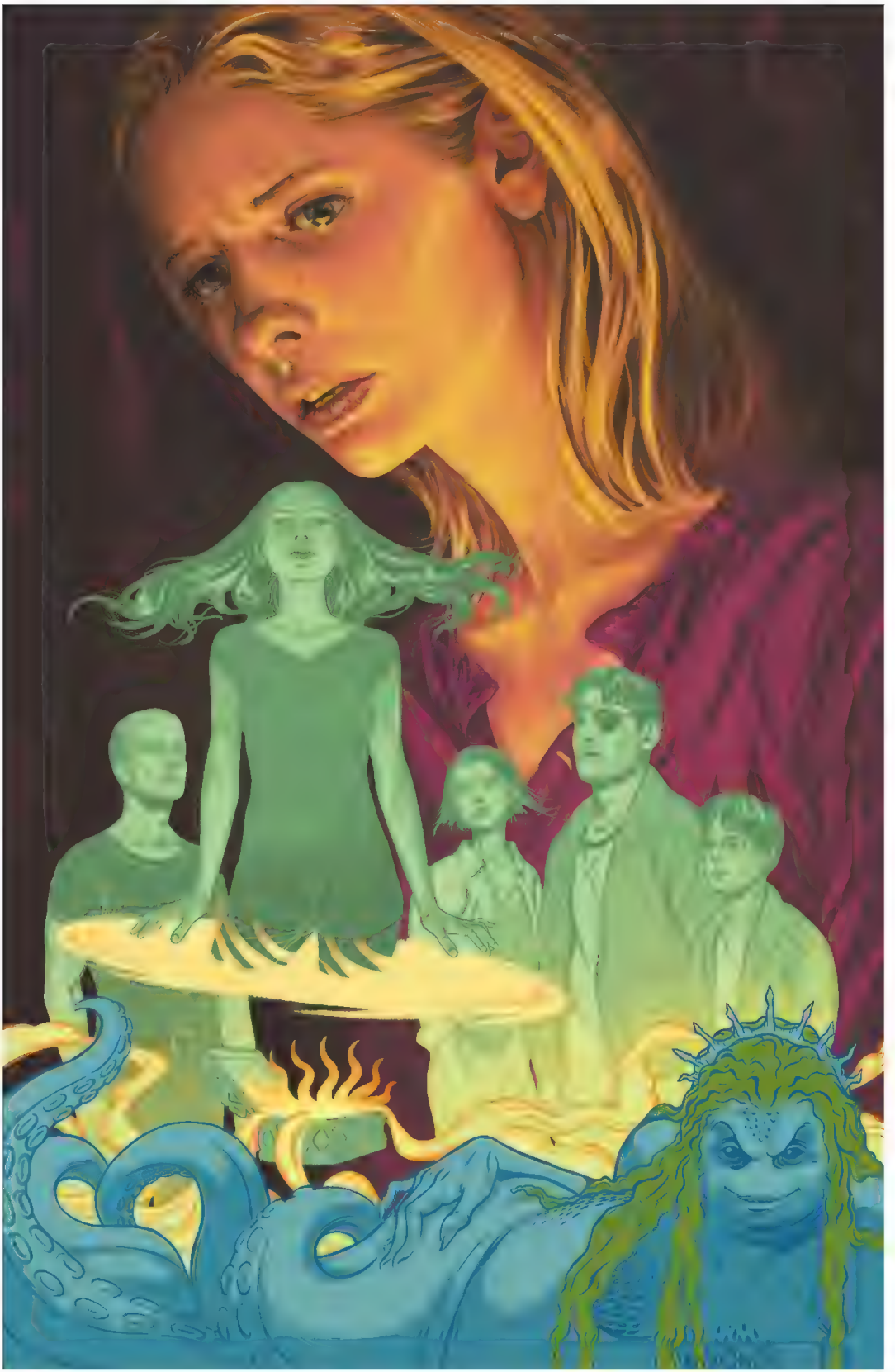


Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #29, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.
Illustrating a moment that, maybe, *should* have happened. Oh, Xander . . .

Variant cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 #30, by Rebekah Isaacs with Dan Jackson.



Concept sketch and cover pencils for the *Buffy* Season 10 #30 variant cover. The Scoobies, the best team of heroes ever, are ready to save the world once again!



Cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 Volume 5: ***In Pieces on the Ground,*** by Steve Morris.

Cover art for *Buffy* Season 10 Volume 6: *Own It*, by Steve Morris.

CREATOR BIOGRAPHIES

Writer, producer, and director **JOSS WHEDON** began writing feature films and acting as a "script doctor" in the 1990s. He introduced the character for which he is most well known in his script for the original *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* film (1992).

In 1997 Whedon founded Mutant Enemy Productions so that he could coproduce the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The series ran from 1997 to 2003, giving birth to Whedon's cult-like fan following, and led to a spinoff series, *Angel*, as well as comics series based on both shows. In 2002, Whedon produced and wrote the television series *Firefly*, which eventually led to a feature film titled *Serenity* (2005), as well as more comics. In 2008, Whedon produced and cowrote, with his brothers Zack and Jed Whedon, and Maurissa Tancharoen, the Emmy-winning online series *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*—again leading to a comics series. Also alongside Jed Whedon and Tancharoen, Whedon produced the television show *Dollhouse*, which premiered in 2009. His most recently produced television work, which he cocreated with Jed Whedon and Tancharoen in 2013, is Marvel's *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* He wrote and directed one of the most ambitious and successful feature films to date: *The Avengers*, based on the Marvel Comics superhero team, along with its sequel, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. He also directed, produced, and composed original music for a film adaptation of the Shakespeare play *Much Ado about Nothing*.

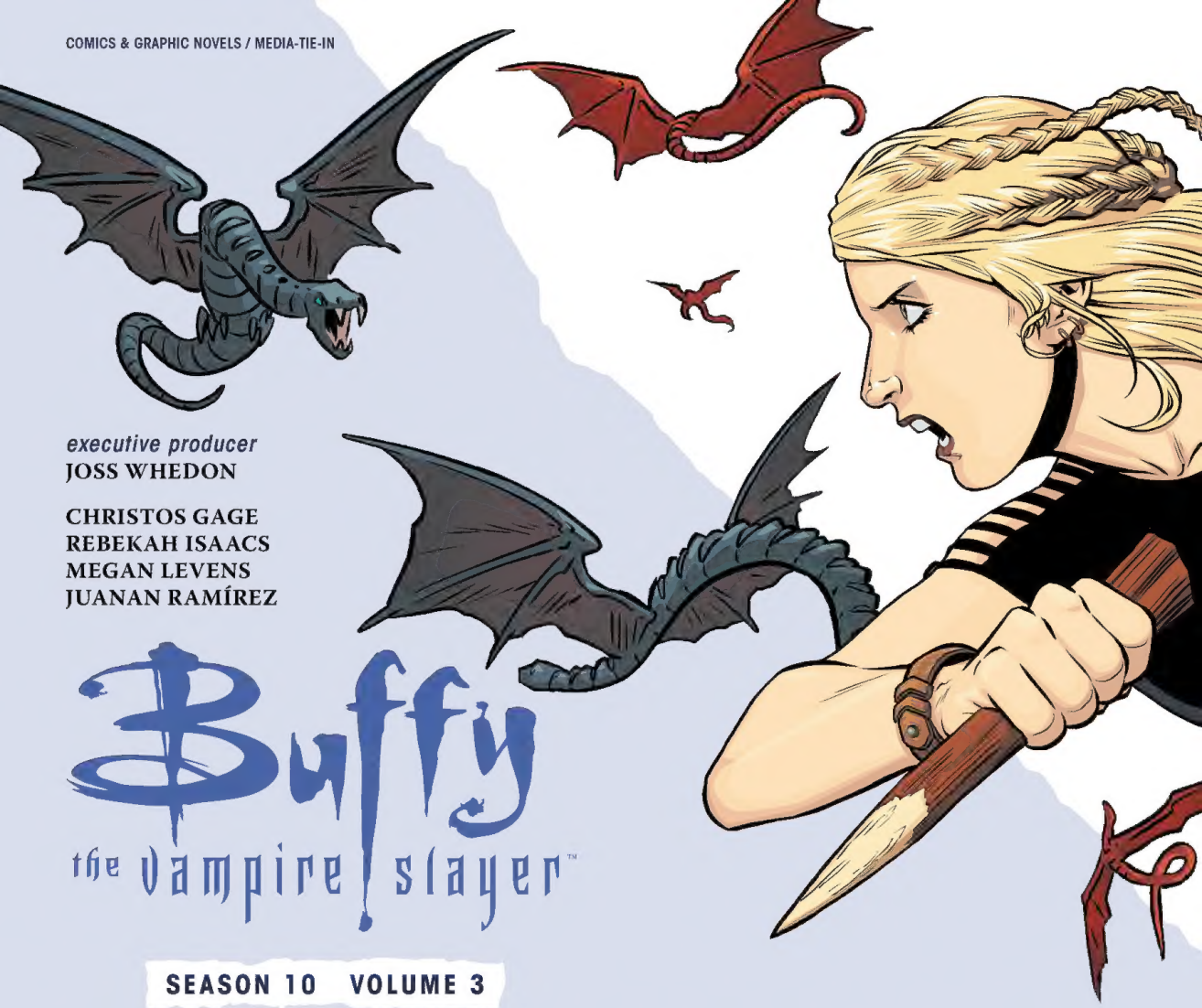
Comics written by Whedon include *Fray* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Seasons 8 and 9, and *Sugarshock*, all for Dark Horse Comics, and *Runaways* and *Astonishing X-Men* for Marvel Comics. Currently he is co-writing both a *Buffy* spin-off series featuring the character Giles with writer Erika Alexander, and *Buffy* Season 12 with writer Christos Gage.

New York Times bestselling author **CHRISTOS GAGE** is a writer of comics, television, movies, graphic novels, and video games. In addition to writing the award–nominated *Angel & Faith*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Seasons 10, 11, and currently, 12, for Dark Horse Comics, he has provided scripts for a number of comics publishers, comics titles including *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Iron Man*, *Avengers Academy*, and graphic novels including *Area 10*, and *Sunset*. Gage has written for a variety of televisions shows, including *Daredevil*, *Law & Order: SVU*, and *Numb3rs*. His resume of film titles include *The Breed*, and *Paradox*, and his video games include Marvel's *Spider-Man*, and *Captain America: Super Soldier*. Gage is a graduate of Brown University and the American Film Institute, from which he received a master's in screenwriting. He often collaborates with his wife, Ruth Fletcher Gage.

Artist **REBEKAH ISAACS**, a graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design, got her start in comics drawing *The After Hours* for the *Twilight Zone* series of graphic novels from Walker & Co. Soon after, she began as a guest artist on *Hack/Slash* for Devil's Due Publishing before working as a series artist on *Drafted* (Desperado/IDW Publishing) and a *Sheena* miniseries for Devil's Due. Her first mainstream work was a fill-in issue of *Ms. Marvel* with writer Brian Reed for Marvel Comics, immediately followed by WildStorm Comics' miniseries revival of *DV8: Gods and Monsters* with writer Brian Wood. Since then, she has worked on titles including *DMZ* (Vertigo/DC Comics), *Magus* (12 Gauge Comics), and *Captain America and the Falcon* (Marvel). She began her work in illustrating the Buffyverse with Angel & Faith and continued as series artist on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Seasons 10 and, most recently, Season 11. A native of Dahlonega, Georgia, Rebekah now lives in New York. She loves Leia Organa, Bowie, and all the cats in the world.

MEGAN LEVENS is a comic book artist best known for her work on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Season 10 for Dark Horse Comics, and her collaborations with writer Jamie S. Rich on Image Comics' *Madame Frankenstein*, and Oni Press's *Ares & Aphrodite*. She has also contributed to several Vertigo anthologies, including the finale of *Fables*, and illustrated *Spell on Wheels* with Kate Leth and Marissa Louise—also for Dark Horse. Most recently she has worked for IDW Publishing on *Star Trek* and *Back to the Future*. Megan is owned by a Boston Terrier and a grumpy old cat, who live with her in Kansas City.

JUANAN RAMÍREZ is a comic book artist who has contributed to DC Comics, Marvel, and Dark Horse Comics. He is best known for his work on Marvel series *Uncanny Avengers*, *Secret Warriors*, *Dark Tower: The Drawing of the Three—The Sailor*, and *Venom*. He currently lives in Spain.



executive producer
JOSS WHEDON

CHRISTOS GAGE
REBEKAH ISAACS
MEGAN LEVENS
JUANAN RAMÍREZ

Buffy the Vampire Slayer™

SEASON 10 VOLUME 3

Creator Joss Whedon's television series continues in comics, where the crew that fights dark forces is currently dealing with demons both real and personal . . .

The Restless Door, a powerful artifact with the ability to create portals to any dimension, has fallen into the hands of the Mistress, the Sculptor, and the Soul Glutton. While the trio of Big Bads is opening portals around the globe, bringing dangerous demons to Earth, Buffy and the Scoobies are struggling to fight this demon world war. They are likewise struggling to get along and disagreeing about how to solve the overall problem. Their paths are diverging, which—for Buffy—feels a lot like betrayal. The result is that while Dawn and Xander are stranded in another dimension and waiting for a rescue, Willow, Giles, Spike, and Buffy are having trouble fighting the growing problems on Earth even while they search for a way to bring Dawn and Xander home. To make matters worse, a new Big Bad makes a move to capture the magical rule book, with disastrous results!

Writer Christos Gage (*The Amazing Spider-Man*) teams with artists Rebekah Isaacs (*Angel & Faith*), Megan Levens (*Spell on Wheels*), and Juanan Ramírez (*Uncanny Avengers*) to bring the gripping finale of Season 10!

This library edition collects the final two arcs of* Buffy *Season 10, a bonus short story, and a sketchbook section.

"IF YOU WERE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT THAT WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY DEFINE THE FUTURE OF THE SCOOBIES, IT STARTS HERE."

—Geeked Out Nation

"Enjoyable, engaging, and horrifically addictive."
—SciFiPulse

"Seamless collaboration between Christos Gage and Rebekah Isaacs."
—Comic Book Resources

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